

# THE EXPOSITORY TIMES

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## Notes of Recent Exposition

How are we to understand the Sermon on the Mount? This is an old question, but Professor Joachim JEREMIAS treats it in a new manner in a short pamphlet of twenty-nine pages which goes to the heart of the matter.<sup>1</sup> He examines and rejects the answer of Professor Windisch and others, that the Sermon contains counsels of perfection for man's obedience, on the ground that this is a righteousness of works, the Law and not the Gospel, which he cannot fulfil. This view is not wholly without foundation (cf. Mt 7<sup>24</sup>), but Jesus was not the teacher of the Law and the wisdom-preacher of His time; His message has burst asunder the frame of Judaism. Not more acceptable is the answer of Lutheran orthodoxy, namely that the commands of the Sermon are incapable of fulfilment, so that man is thrown back upon the grace of God. In contrast with Paul, Jesus has nowhere thought of man as incapable of fulfilling the will of God, but in an astonishing manner He expects of His disciples that they do what He commands. Nor can we accept the view of J. Weiss and A. Schweitzer that the injunctions of the Sermon are an *Interimsethik* for the short interval before the Parousia. Jesus is no fanatical dreamer. His ethic is not an expression of anxiety before the final catastrophe. His words avail not merely before the End, but afterwards. His emphasis lies on the fact that God's salvation is here.

JEREMIAS believes literary and form-critical studies bear on the meaning of the Sermon. Matthew has arranged the sayings in five great groups, but he presents Jesus not merely as a Second Moses, but as the Messiah of *word and deed*, the bearer of God's Spirit in its fullness. Luke's Sermon on the Plain represents an earlier stage and behind both Luke and Matthew lies Aramaic tradition. Matthew wrote about A.D. 75-80, but Luke's discourse takes us back to the first decade

after the death of Jesus. It is a collection of single logia of Jesus which He spoke on various occasions. The same is true of Matthew's Sermon. We have to distinguish between the edifice and the stones of which it is built. Having said this, JEREMIAS asks the question, For what purpose was the collection of sayings in the Sermon made? He recalls Professor Dodd's distinction between *Kerygma* and *Didache*, and questions the view that the latter should be limited to ethical instruction. The distinction is much too narrow. The Sermon has the character of a catechism for those about to be baptized and for those newly baptized, but, if so, *something must have gone before*, namely the preaching of the gospel, conversion, the experience of being overcome by the Good News. He reaches the same conclusion when he considers the isolated sayings in the Sermon, the statements of Jesus about Himself (for example Mt 5<sup>17</sup>), the crisis-words (Mt 5<sup>25f.</sup> etc.), and controversial sayings against the scribes and Pharisees (Mt 5<sup>21-48</sup>, 6<sup>1-18</sup>), the counsels about anxiety, and instructions about the daily life of the disciples. In each case something went before (*es ging etwas voran*).

Five examples are given. The first is 'Ye are the light of the world' (Mt 5<sup>14</sup>), which is absurd when taken by itself, as a description of the disciples in their weakness, but is at once meaningful when preceded by 'I am the light of the world' (Jn 8<sup>12</sup>) though unexpressed in this context. A better example is Mt 6<sup>15</sup>, 'If ye forgive not men, neither can (so the Aramaic imperfect) your heavenly Father forgive you', which appears to suggest a relationship of tit for tat. But the same saying is found in Mt 18<sup>35</sup> at the end of the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, where the suggestion is 'So much has God forgiven thee, must thou not forgive the small offence?' Something goes before every sentence in the Sermon, in fact the whole Gospel and the example of Jesus Himself. Thus the sayings are an essential part of the Gospel. So regarded the difficulty of the demands of Jesus

<sup>1</sup> *Die Bergpredigt* (Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart; DM 1.60).



in the Sermon is intelligible and the want of connexion in it is explained. *Die Bergpredigt, das ist unser Ergebnis, es nicht Gesetz, sondern Evangelium* (not Law but Gospel).

The 'Notes' in our issue of February included a description of the essay Dr. Emil Brunner contributed to *Religion and Culture*<sup>1</sup>—the volume of essays in honour of Dr. Paul Tillich. The essay gave a graphic account of a unique Christian mission he encountered during his sojourn in Japan. In view of the prominent place Dr. Rudolf BULTMANN holds in the contemporary theological situation we select also for brief description his essay on 'Preaching, Genuine and Secularized'.

Any kind of communication, historical or philosophical, *if it functions as an appeal*, can have the character of preaching but it is only in the area of religious or specifically Christian preaching that secularization can occur. We begin, then, says BULTMANN by asking (and within the Christian context) what is meant by preaching.

In terms of the New Testament preaching is direct address, a calling. It is '*kerygma*', '*evangelion*', message. The messengers are men—the prophets in the Old Testament, Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament. They proclaim in their own, human words, but what is met in their proclamation is the call of God. In Him not in them is the authority that certifies this call and so commands belief. In St. Paul's word 'we preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ as Lord'.

This description gives us not only the *form* of preaching but the *standard* by which it can be judged. We can particularize this in three statements. (1) Preaching is not the propagation of general truths. (2) Preaching is not to be confused with teaching, even when teaching means ethical instruction (though of course preaching can stimulate mind and conscience). (3) Preaching does not consist of doctrinal statements for which assent is sought, any more than the obedience of faith depends on having high conceptual understanding of the Person of Christ. In these three

ways preaching can become secularized. By that we mean that they are ways in which the challenge of the living God within the concrete situation of the hearer may be blunted, robbed of its aspect of call. The question, then, that must now be asked is, What is the content of Christian preaching? This can be answered in the words of the Titus Epistle, 'the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men'. Thus the content is an event, a historical fact, Jesus Christ—His birth, work, death, resurrection. But to speak of Jesus on the historical level, as a hero, a model of piety, a bearer of a new ethic, a beneficent influence—that, no matter the eloquence of presentation, would be not genuine but secularized preaching. For the event within history transcends history. Jesus was the end of the old world, the beginning of the new. Only because the event had this dimension (the magnitude and mystery of the 'end') did it become a concern of life and therefore the content of preaching.

But how, then, can there be to-day, as distinct from the early days, genuine preaching about this *fact* of history as an *end* of history? In the same way, as it was possible at the beginning, by a preaching whose message is 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. Two crucial things are included in this for the faith of the Church. (1) It means that in the preached word itself Jesus is present as Lord, making His authority and claim audible, and (2) it means that this presence places the hearer at a point of decision. He, the hearer, is called even while history and the world in the ordinary sense go on, to rise above them, to decide whether he will found his life on what is temporary or purely personal, or to come out into a freedom into which this Lord invites him, and which He makes secure for now and the future. Genuine preaching occurs wherever and however Christ becomes God's way of gracious salutation—'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation'.

This essay on preaching as the spoken word has a truly evangelical ring, yet the doubt remains whether preaching can be so separated from the historical story, from the 'human form' of the Word in Jesus, as BULTMANN thinks it can. But his final comment will have full approval. The official minister is not alone the preacher. Every divine service can sound the message, every deed of a good life make it audible.

<sup>1</sup> S.C.M.; 45s. net.



# Modern Issues in Biblical Studies

## The Religion of the Near East and the Old Testament

BY THE REVEREND J. N. SCHOFIELD, M.A., B.D., CAMBRIDGE

THE study of Old Testament religion has, for many years, been bedevilled by the adherents of successive forms of orthodoxy. Uncritical orthodoxy thinks of Old Testament religion as *sui generis*, taught by Israel's God through Moses, renewed and retaught through reforming prophets, priests, and kings, but only in its debased forms connected in any vital way with earlier or contemporaneous religions of the Near East. Critical orthodoxy, which has shown itself to be capable of being as rigid and intolerant as uncritical orthodoxy, born in an evolutionary age, stresses the lowly beginnings of Hebrew religion and its progressive development to the monotheistic heights of Deutero-Isaiah; it uses beliefs and practices found in later Semitic religions and material remains discovered by archaeology to interpret the Old Testament, and to reconstruct the stages through which its religion is supposed to have passed. Another form, at present probably more fashionable even than various types of revived uncritical orthodoxy, might be called 'pattern' orthodoxy; enthusiastic extremists vie with each other in constructing a mosaic pattern from the myth and ritual remains of the religions of ancient surrounding nations of the Near East, and in seeking traces of the pattern in the Old Testament by which the whole of its religion, literature, and history can be interpreted; often they appear to trust where they cannot trace to such an extent that the onlooker exclaims in wonder, 'all things are possible to him that believeth'.

Writing in 1889 Robertson Smith expressed his belief that after the work of such scholars as Kuenen and Wellhausen, apostles of critical orthodoxy, in arranging the Old Testament documents in historical order, nothing of vital importance for the historical study of Old Testament religion remained uncertain, that the growth of that religion from stage to stage could be followed, and comparisons made between the Hebrew religion in its various stages and the religions of other Semitic races (*Religion of the Semites* [1927], xv). His book marked an epoch in the understanding of the Old Testament, and later writers (cf. Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* [1937], 110) explicitly assumed that the Hebrews, being Semites, shared with the rest of the race, in the

earliest stages of its history, *all* the beliefs which evidence shows to have been common property, finding traces of these beliefs in books of the Old Testament which are demonstrably late. Robertson Smith believed that there was a profound spiritual difference between the religion of the Old Testament and other religions; the darker, cruder elements in the Semitic background he linked with popular, and even with some forms of priestly, religion of the Hebrews, so that against it the lofty spiritual heights of the prophets stood out in vivid contrast. Scholarly opinion may not now accept his theories of the course of religious development, of the meaning of sacrifice, nor of the central importance of totemism, but from his analysis arose the concept of corporate personality as explaining Hebrew thought form prior to Jeremiah in reference both to God and man; in both Divine and human categories, however, it is now recognized that the Hebrews did not think of individuals as part of a corporate whole only, but that it is more accurate to speak of individuality as defective rather than absent.

From the comparison of Old Testament religion with the wider Semitic world came another legacy which still divides Old Testament scholars. To what extent were the canonical prophets of Israel, apart altogether from the false prophets whom they condemned, ecstatic like the mantic or dervish of the Semites? Prophets whom Saul met, and those who lived with Samuel, had an ecstatic spirit that the young king found infectious or contagious; Elisha used music as an aid to inspiration, but there does not appear to be clear evidence that the prophets of whom we have written records, from Amos onward, were ecstatic either in their mode of inspiration or their medium of expression.

A fresh incentive to interpret the Old Testament in terms of Near Eastern religion came from archaeology, which has provided so many material remains of the contemporaneous religions of Palestine and the surrounding countries. In the first Schweich lecture, over fifty years ago, S. R. Driver concluded that the result of previous archaeological research had been to take the Hebrews out of an isolated position, demonstrating their affinities with, and often their dependence on, surrounding civilization, and he stressed the



importance of the influences from Mesopotamia (*Modern Research as Illustrating the Bible* [1907]). His conclusion has since been supported by many more archaeological discoveries, particularly in Syria through which most of the extraneous influences entered Palestine. They have supported also his claim that the material elements on which the religious system of the Israelites was constructed were often shared with their neighbours. Their religious institutions can no longer be viewed, as was once possible, as differing in kind from those of other nations and determined in every detail by a direct revelation from heaven; all have substantial analogies among other peoples, the distinctive character which they exhibit among the Hebrews being in the spirit with which they are infused, and the deep religious truths of which they are made the exponents. Written records, especially religious texts from Ras Shamra, contain words and phrases used in the Old Testament; and many other linguistic discoveries have enabled comparative Semitic philology to elucidate difficult passages and words in the Old Testament, and thrown light on its religion.

In a later series of Schweich lectures, S. A. Cook suggested that archaeology revealed differences as well as similarities; that the religion of Palestine had an individuality of its own; that it protested and reacted against other religions, even those which enable us to understand Israel; and that non-Israelite and pre-Israelite life and thought supplied the material which the great reforming minds of Israel reshaped and invested with a fuller content, thus giving permanent value to Old Testament threads of religious development. In subsequent years, however, there has been a tendency to stress the dependence of Israel's religion on the cultures of the Near East rather than its protest, its affinities more than its reaction and individuality, and there is need at the present time for a more careful appraisal of the evidence than is possible in this article. It must be remembered, as S. A. Cook was careful to indicate in the title of his lectures, that excavations reveal the ancient religion of *Palestine* in the light of archaeology, and not necessarily the religion of Israel. There are practices and beliefs among Christians to-day—astrology for example—which are not part of official Christianity nor can they be used to elucidate the faith of the Church, and we have similarly no right to assume that religion in Palestine during Israel's occupation was all of one piece; there may have been popular superstitions discountenanced by priests and prophets; there may have been cultic practices retained by certain priests with a veneer of Yahwism, but condemned by prophets and not in the main

stream of Hebrew religious thought. Further, it cannot be too strongly stated that words and phrases, as well as material symbols, constantly change their meaning and significance, so that they must be interpreted in the light of the context in which they are found, and the context of the prophetic books and the Psalter is not the same as that of the writings from Ras Shamra or the material remains from Palestine itself.

If we turn now to 'pattern orthodoxy' we find what has been called the 'myth and ritual pattern' providing, at the present time, the centre of interest in the study of the relation between the religions of the Near East and the Old Testament. In the Frazer lecture for 1950 (*The Problem of Similarities in Ancient Near Eastern Religions* [1951]) Frankfort quoted from Frazer's monumental work (*The Golden Bough*, x. p. vii), 'To sift out the elements of culture which a race has independently evolved and to distinguish them accurately from those which it has derived from other races, is a task of extreme difficulty and delicacy, which promises to occupy students of man for a long time to come'. Frazer thought of myth and its manifestation in ritual and belief as due to 'essential similarity in the working of the less developed human mind among all races, which corresponds to the essential similarity in their bodily frame revealed by comparative anthropology' (*Balder the Beautiful*, i. p. vii), but Frankfort gives a warning that many followers of Frazer wrongly claim that one definite pattern underlies most or all religions, and at least those of the ancient Near East (*ib.*, 6 f.). Similarly E. O. James in 1932 (*Origins of Sacrifice*, p. vi f.) wrote of the danger of interpreting the final products in religion in terms of the crude beginnings by the simple method of overleaping the intervening series of changes in thought and expression regardless of the fact that, while magic and materialism no doubt persisted, all the nobler minds warred against them.

S. H. Hooke, whose two books (*Myth and Ritual* [1933] and *The Labyrinth* [1935]) unleashed such a flood of literature and controversy, has related the story of the origin of his own work and the subsequent history of the movement (*Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* [1958]), and has given clear expression to some of his own basic contentions while tacitly dissociating himself from some of the later, more extreme forms of the 'ritual pattern theory'. The purpose of *Myth and Ritual* was to inquire whether any of the elements of the observed group of ritual practices bound together by the Accadian kingship ideology might be found in the civilizations of the ancient Near East, not to impose recklessly a pattern on Old Testament religion, nor even to postulate the



occurrence of Accadian elements. Problems cluster round two main questions:

(1) Do there exist sufficient common factors in the cult practices and their associated myths of early Egypt, the early city states of Sumer and Akkad, and pre-Israelite Canaanite cities, to constitute a 'pattern'?

(2) Can elements from this association of myth and ritual be observed—rather than inferred—in the religion of Israel as it appears in the Old Testament, apart from the popular syncretistic forms condemned in the Law and the Prophets?

On the first question there is disagreement increased by the publication of the copious writings from Ras Shamra. The balance of evidence appears to show that in Sumer and Akkad a cult pattern developed, best known from references to the Babylon New Year festival in late texts. So far as Egypt is concerned the verdict is not so simple. S. H. Hooke reminds us that 'in Egypt the peculiar place of the Nile in her economy, and the unique development of ideas about death and the after-life, led to the creation of a religious pattern whose differences have almost submerged those common elements' (*Myth, Ritual, and Kingship*, 10); and it seems hazardous to assume that the common elements existed. The evidence for the religious pattern in Canaan is even more tenuous. S. H. Hooke writes, 'Much is still obscure, but it is safe to say that the shape of Canaanite religion tentatively presented in *Myth and Ritual* on the basis of what was then known about the Ras Shamra texts, has been confirmed in the main, though with important modifications, by fuller knowledge of those texts' (*ib.*, 11); but R. de Langhe's article ('Myth, Ritual, and Kingship in the Ras Shamra Tablets', in *ib.*, 122 ff.) makes it clear that the pattern cannot be observed, but only inferred, at Ras Shamra; and even a glance at the notes on the pages of J. Gray's book (*The Legacy of Canaan* [Leiden, 1957]) shows how hypothetical are many of the reconstructions of the texts and how imaginative their application to cult practices. The texts throw light on the background, and give meaning and personality to deities of Canaan whose worship was condemned in the Old Testament, but they contain no explicit evidence that the poems had any relation to annual occasions (G. R. Driver, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [1956], 20). If we are to profit from the valuable Ras Shamra material, we must break from the usual, annoying concatenation of phrases now employed to refer to specific instances of relationship between it and the Hebrew literature; what begins as 'an interesting parallel' becomes 'a close relation', until at last we are told that 'it has been proved conclusively that the Old

Testament is here dependent'. The discovery of the connexion of myth with ritual is a great gain for Old Testament studies, but that a common myth and ritual pattern existed throughout the Near East appears at present to need more proof before it is wise to interpret words, phrases, myth, or ritual in the Old Testament in terms of the myth and ritual pattern of any other Near Eastern culture.

We thus come to the second question as to whether any elements from this association of myth and ritual can be observed in the religion of Israel as it appears in the Old Testament. S. H. Hooke states (*ib.*, 15), 'The Ras Shamra evidence, now so much better understood, shows how definite that pattern was, at any rate in the north-west corner of Canaan, and also how many features in it suggest the influence of Babylon and Assyria, hence it is a legitimate inference that Israel came under that influence directly through its Canaanite contacts'; it appears that this claim for the Ras Shamra evidence goes too far, but we must still ask whether and to what extent the Old Testament was influenced by other Near Eastern cultures. It seems fair to suggest that confusion may be caused by using the phrase 'the religion of Israel as it appears in the Old Testament' unless it is clearly distinguished from 'the pure religion of Yahweh'. In the former Hooke includes the deliberate assimilation of Canaanite cult practices in Israel shortly after the entry into Canaan (*ib.*, 15), Canaanite tendencies in the time of David and Solomon later expurgated (*ib.*, 13), and the wholly baalized cult of the bull deity at Bethel (*ib.*, 12 f.); in reference to the latter he states emphatically that 'the very fact that such a religion as that which shines in the prophets could flower in the soil of Israel shows that a vital seed was hidden in the soil' (*ib.*, 14 f.), and 'the persistence and preservation of the vital seed in the religion of Israel lay in the principle of the remnant' (*ib.*, 20 f.). Would it not be wiser to limit the term 'the religion of Israel as it appears in the Old Testament' to this vital seed? Most scholars would agree that Near Eastern elements are discernible in the religion reflected in the Old Testament account of the period of the Judges (*ib.*, 14) but how far was the vital seed fertilized by them?

The passage quoted by S. H. Hooke from Ezekiel (*ib.*, 15) probably shows not only how far deliberate assimilation of Canaanite cult practices had gone in Israel very shortly after the entry into Canaan, but also how far some Israelites had continued assimilation; yet had the vital seed also persisted? Where was it when the pure Yahwism which rejected all foreign cults could not be found under the monarchy, when Yahweh



was the Baal-berith of the hypothetical amphyctyonic league at Shechem, when Shiloh was so wicked, and when the northern kingdom was made to sin? If the religion of Israel means the religion of all Israelites, then these extraneous elements must be included, but if we believe with S. H. Hooke that the vital seed was the religion of Israel, that the stories of the experiences of Abraham and Moses can be accepted, and that the eighth century prophets did not create 'the true religion of Israel', then there must have persisted a righteous remnant in which the seed lay, flowering or dormant; a thin red line of protest against assimilation, carrying the true religion of Israel. From such a protest could flow prophetic antagonism to ritual as something Yahweh hated, took no delight in, and neither demanded nor commanded.

S. A. Cook used to claim that the religion of the Old Testament developed, not along a straight

line, but on a spiral produced by action and reaction of popular, priestly, and prophetic forms of religion; our understanding of that religion appears to develop in a similar way; the more violent the action, the stronger the reaction. To-day there is a confident assertion that the prophets of Israel were all cultic officials, that their utterances did not oppose the cult except when it was performed with unclean hands, that many of the Psalms were composed for cultic occasions in terms of which they must be understood, and that much of Israel's literature—the accounts of the sojourn in Egypt, Deborah's song, the Philistine capture of the Ark, and the exile in Babylon—merely relate part of the myth and ritual pattern in story form; to-morrow may come the reaction making possible an assessment of the abiding value of these assertions in the light of a fresh understanding of the Old Testament itself.

## Literature

### AN ANGLICAN APOLOGIA

ANY Anglican who wishes to have a deeper understanding of the Church to which he belongs, and any non-Anglican who, out of his ecumenical concern, wishes to appreciate the peculiar ethos of Anglicanism, would be advised to read Professor J. V. Langmead Casserley's *Christian Community* (Longmans; 21s. net). The author divides his work into two parts, of which the second is devoted entirely to the Anglican Communion, while the first expounds the doctrine of the Church in a way that clearly reveals his Anglican bias.

After describing the Biblical image of the Church, following the now familiar model of an hour-glass lying on its side, narrowing down from the Chosen People through the Remnant to Christ and widening out through the apostles to the Catholic Church, Dr. Casserley grapples with the relationship of Church and Kingdom. He asserts that the Church exists as a unity on three levels: the Church Militant characterized by faith, the Church Expectant characterized by hope and the Church Triumphant characterized by love. With the last of these the Kingdom is to be identified, although its powers are already operative within the first which may be defined by empirical description. The foremost element in this description is its structure and Dr. Casserley gives a valuable account of the distinction between polity and structure, and finds the latter present in the episcopacy. He deals faithfully with the objections commonly raised against such a view, namely, that it is mechanical,

that it 'unchurches' those who do not have it, and that it has not preserved the unity it is supposed to safeguard. Then after a lively survey of the Church's functions, in relation to worship, evangelism, pastoral care, and the prophetic ministry, he grapples with the difficult problem of authority, distinguishing between the authority of the Church and authority in the Church, and shows, on the basis of the familiar Anglican triad, Scripture-tradition-faith, how the authority of the Church rests upon the authority of the Holy Spirit over the Church.

Much that Dr. Casserley says will no doubt commend general assent, but his argument from structure in favour of episcopacy will not find favour with all, and many may feel inclined to ask if, as an Anglican, he is prepared to assign the papacy to the realm of polity, why should not a Free Churchman assign episcopacy also to the same realm? As an Anglican, I think that the author has a satisfactory answer to this, but if it does not carry general conviction, it at least raises the important question whether or not the Church has a structure and, if so, what is it? Yet Dr. Casserley has a tendency to achieve theological coherence by interpreting the facts to suit his doctrine, and obviously finds it difficult to think of non-episcopal bodies as belonging to the Church; he prefers to call them parts of Christendom, which is to evade the real issue.

In the second half of his book, Dr. Casserley avoids no issues and gives what may be described as a prophetic account of Anglicanism and its



destiny. Although, he argues, it may have begun as a *via media*, a form of compromise, it is primarily a movement toward a synthesis, from a mutual toleration of extremes to a real unification of the Catholic and Evangelical view-points, which is possible because they are not negations but complements. The essence of Anglicanism is the 'proposal to contain the validities of the Reformation protest within the context of Catholic institutions', and Dr. Casserley declares that there are signs that Anglicanism is advancing toward this synthesis. It is, therefore, by its very nature an ecumenical movement. What then is its relation to the ecumenical movement as a whole? It is pointed out, very pertinently, that to describe it as a bridge may be misleading, since a single bridge can only lead one from A to B and not from C to D; so, for example, in a *rapprochement* between Presbyterians and Lutherans, Anglicanism cannot act as a bridge, although it might between Lutherans and Roman Catholics or between Reformed and Eastern Orthodox. Rather the Anglican contribution is to be seen in its upholding the Catholic doctrine of the Church, in its playing a leading part in the formulation of Biblical theology and in its witnessing to the attitude of the Roman Church which may all too easily be forgotten in the absence of its representatives. An interesting but not very penetrating analysis of liturgical revision follows and the whole is concluded with some suggestions for furthering Anglican unity and the Anglican ideal.

This is a lively book, with many flashes of insight, with many fallacies fearlessly exposed, and with many thought-provoking statements. It is a pity that it lacks an index, since the full table of contents is no adequate compensation, but it is a book to be read as a whole and it whets the appetite for the two volumes on the Sacraments and on Christian Existentialism which are promised to follow.

J. G. DAVIES

### THE NEW WILLISTON WALKER

For over forty years Williston Walker's one volume *History of the Christian Church* has been a standard work. Clearly written and well-proportioned it served the needs of generations of students and won widespread acceptance. There have been advances in scholarship, however, since it was written, and Church History has taken a more notably ecumenical trend. It is good news therefore that a revised edition has been published by Messrs. T. and T. Clark at 42s. net. The revisers are three Church historians from Union Theological Seminary, New York—Professors Cyril C. Richardson, Wilhelm Pauck, and Robert T. Handy. The

first has been responsible for the revision down to the early Middle Ages, the second for the period up to and through the Reformation, and the third for the modern period down to the present day.

Throughout the greater part of the book the former structural division into periods and sections has been retained, although alterations and expansions have taken place here and there. Only in the modern period have new sections been added to bring the narrative up to date and to give that period better balance. We note, for example, that the paragraph on the development of creed in the second century, which contained twenty-three lines in the old edition, now contains thirty-four and the substance is considerably altered. In the Reformation period the space given to the Anabaptists is almost doubled; while the last two chapters of the book as we now have it are entitled, 'The Eastern Churches in Modern Times' and 'The Ecumenical Movement'. The bibliography has been brought up to date—though Scotland seems to fare rather badly in it—and the maps have increased from four to six, including one for the ecumenical movement.

This year sees the centenary of the birth of Dr. Williston Walker. We are glad to have his work thus fully revised and we wish the revised edition in the next forty years as useful a career as the first edition has had.

STEWART MECHIE

### THE SHORTER GROLLENBERG

Grollenberg's 'Atlas of the Bible' quickly won a secure place for itself among modern Bible Atlases. The author has now issued a *Shorter Atlas of the Bible* (Nelson; 15s. net) which will by its very modest price—little more than one-fifth of the other's—make more widely available some of the treasures the larger work had to offer. Like its predecessor, this volume is a delight to the eyes. It is superbly illustrated, and while the plates are far fewer, many of them are not to be found in the larger work. Unfortunately there are no captions under the pictures, and the reader must refer to the end of the book for the descriptions of them. Though this is a real defect, it should be added that in the eleven pages of notes on the plates which he will find there, he will discover more than captions. A great deal of valuable information is packed into these pages.

The maps are new, and much fewer than in the previous work. In this there are but ten maps, and while they do not contain the wealth of information which was supplied in the big Grollenberg, they will prove widely useful and of high value. They are up-to-date and scholarly, and though they are not over-crowded with names, they



will be found to contain a high proportion of the places mentioned in the Bible.

The text is also new, and in no sense a mere abridgement of that of the major work. In twenty-four short chapters it describes the Biblical world, and briefly surveys the history of the people of Israel and of the Early Church throughout the Biblical period. In the text there are cross references to the pictures by the pages on which they will be found. Dr. Grollenberg is a master of the art of condensation, and the amount of solid instruction as well as entertainment packed into this little book is quite surprising. Yet it is thoroughly readable, and not at all a dry chronicle. All in all, this little book is sure of an enthusiastic welcome.

H. H. ROWLEY

### REVELATION

*Ideas of Revelation: An Historical Study, A.D. 1700 to A.D. 1860*, by the Rev. H. D. McDonald, B.A., B.D., Ph.D. (Macmillan; 30s. net), just misses being a work of great importance. The subject is supremely relevant, and a study of the historical background of modern ideas of revelation has been a *desideratum*. There can be no question of Dr. McDonald's erudition, or of his ability to make acute comments in the light of recent work. No one is likely to lay down his book without having learned a great deal about known and unknown theologians (mainly English) of the period in question. Whatever shortcomings this book may have, it is going to be a valuable quarry to all students of the subject.

The weaknesses seem to me to be threefold. First, Dr. McDonald would surely have been wiser to be either more historical or more systematic in his plan of attack. As it is, he falls between the two. The readers who desire to study theologians and philosophers in their historical background will be puzzled by the non-historical arrangement. The fact is that Dr. McDonald has arranged his material according to an intricate thematic plan, and it is this which explains why some names turn up all over the place, why also Simeon and Wesley, historically early, are expounded last.

Secondly, Dr. McDonald's interest in Scripture might have led him to apply a Scriptural test to the many theories he surveys. What idea of revelation is *implied* by Scripture itself, and by the responses to revelation, so widely described in Scripture? Strangely, this is a principle of judgment which Dr. McDonald nowhere presses home with the force it demands. When he takes up the theme of Scripture in his chapters on Simeon and Wesley, it is the subject of inspiration with which he is concerned. And that is not exactly the same

thing. Thus even his careful theme falls apart somewhat. The whole valuable discussion of reason, faith and feeling, the objective and the subjective, needs to be brought to the touchstone of the *implicates* of Holy Scripture. Simeon and Wesley, forming the climax of his book, contribute very little to the problems raised by the earlier chapters. Perhaps one might be permitted to complain also that Dr. McDonald seems scarcely to understand the greatness of Bishop Butler, and that his discussion of Luther and Calvin on Scripture is superficial. There is more to it.

Thirdly, Dr. McDonald is unbelievably inaccurate. Much more serious than frequent errors of spelling and careless proof-reading are errors of fact and quotation. For example, the simple facts of the life of F. D. Maurice are so fantastically boggled on p. 181 that the reader may be pardoned if he loses trust in the author's guidance altogether. In a book which is full of felicitous quotations, the references rarely give the date of the book quoted, often not the editions, often not the correct form of reference to the passage. I have not yet been able to find, in my own copies, quotations from Hooker and Coleridge which fascinated me. The alphabetical list of books at the end is useless as an index, full of mistakes, and a model of what not to do. In short, it is not safe to take facts or quotations from this book without checking them, and unfortunately there are often unnecessary impedimenta in the way of checking them.

D. R. JONES

### DEVOTIONAL BOOKS

*The Little Flowers of St. Francis* (Penguin Books; 3s. 6d. net).

*S. Francis of Assisi: His Life and Writings as recorded by his Contemporaries* (Mowbray; 15s. net).

*The Mirror of Faith*, by William of St. Thierry (Mowbray's Fleur de Lys series; 6s. net).

The Fioretti is probably the best known of the Franciscan documents, and has had a great popularity in a number of translations. It consists of stories and incidents about St. Francis and his companions and was collected about a century after his death. Mr. Leo Sherley-Price's translation is a smooth one which reads excellently and avoids the pseudo-Authorized Version language of some of his predecessors. He adds as appendices his translations of the Testament of the Saint: the Canticle of the Sun: the Paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer: and the Blessing for Brother Leo. Mr. Sherley-Price understands Francis, and says of him in his Introduction, 'His purpose was not to make his hearers lovers of birds, beasts, and flowers, but to inspire them



to follow Christ, and make them lovers of the holy Cross.'

Mr. Sherley-Price is also the translator of the *Speculum Perfectionis*, which forms the bulk of the second book, with its rather ambiguous title. The *Speculum* was first published by Paul Sabatier in 1898 and immediately translated into English by Sebastian Evans. The only other English version, until the present one, appears to be that of Robert Steele in 1903. Since these earlier translations much critical work has been done concerning the text and authorship of the work and Mr. Sherley-Price refers to this in a short but admirable Foreword. All the known writings of St. Francis are included in the volume. They are comparatively few, but contain his unmistakable stamp.

It is impossible to talk about St. Francis. His spirituality has the same impact when the documents are re-read. As a young teacher of science said recently on reading a life of St. Francis for the first time, 'I felt as if something had hit me'.

Abbot William of St. Thierry is mainly known as the author of 'The Golden Epistle'. Here Messrs. Geoffrey Webb and Adrian Walker, who gave us a translation of his unfinished life of his close friend, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, have given us a translation of another of his works. Both 'The Golden Epistle' and *The Mirror of Faith* were actually written when William had resigned the abbacy of the Benedictine house of St. Thierry in 1135 and, against the advice of Bernard, had joined the Cistercian Reform as an ordinary monk at Signy. It was William who urged Bernard to defend the Faith against Abelard, and the translators tell us that 'The Mirror is not a manual of apologetics, even though it was directed against specific points of Abelard's teaching'. Having been told this we can trace another meaning in William's constant stress on submission to authority and his warnings against innovations. In these circumstances we should not expect him to have anything very original to say on faith, and he hasn't. But his book is the mature work of a devout man who has evidently thought much on all that the Scriptures say about faith, and it is consequently an admirable book for spiritual reading.

Both the books published by Mowbray have an *Imprimatur*.

DENIS LANT

### THE CHURCH: APOSTOLIC AND ONE

*The Missionary Church in East and West*, edited by Charles C. West and David M. Paton (S.C.M.; 9s. 6d. net) is the latest volume in the series

'Studies in Ministry and Worship'. The book, important in its own right, has special value in sharing with a wider circle something of the seminal thinking going on at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey.

Dr. West, Associate Director at Bossey, introduces the theme of the book—the boundary running not between home and foreign, between 'Christian' and 'non-Christian' lands, but between Church and world, everywhere; and sets the facts to be considered on the background of the missionary nature of the Church seen in the ministry and fellowship of New Testament Christians as illustrated in 2 Co 3-6. The Church in the world is considered first from within 'the broken West' by Fr. Marlies Cremer, social worker in Germany; next an Asian view is given by Pastor Sihombing of the Batak Church; and then David Paton gives a new connotation to the term 'Uitlander' as descriptive of the Christian—a pilgrim in no-man's-land.

At this point the pattern seems to disintegrate as Dr. van Leeuwen of the D.R. Church describes the response of Islam to the impact of the West, and Bishop Newbigin, on the background of India, develops the thesis that we are seeing to-day the drawing together of the human race into the history centred in the Cross. However, the relevance becomes clearer in Dr. Blauer's study of the mission of the People of God, carried further by Hans-Ruedi Weber in an account of the marks of an evangelizing Church pointed by reference to experiences of renewal in the Western churches. Finally Dr. West returns to show the relation of the varied contributions to the outlines of a Church which would be missionary in this world.

This bare description is enough to commend the diverse richness of a volume offered as an attempt to discover the outlines of that one community into which Christians can come to think and pray together and from which they can go out together into the world.

MARCUS WARD

### PHILOSOPHY AIDING RELIGION

Some four years ago Professor H. D. Lewis of King's College, University of London, edited an outstanding book on 'Contemporary British Philosophy', containing articles by some of the most famous philosophers of the day. To this he himself modestly contributed only one article, but he has now greatly enhanced his reputation by producing a book of his own, intended to interest laymen as well as professional philosophers—*Our Experience of God* (Allen and Unwin; 30s. net). At the outset he indicates an interesting contrast between Bertrand Russell and himself in regard to



method of approach. With Bertrand Russell the initial approach to philosophy was a desire to discover if philosophy could provide any basis for religion, and his conclusion—then—was in the negative. Professor Lewis says that originally religion had little to do with his interest in philosophy, but as his philosophical knowledge widened, he became increasingly aware of its value for religion, and it is this which he specially wishes to get across to his readers by means of the present book. Not that he thinks that philosophy is indispensable for religious understanding, but he holds that it can render inestimable service in helping us to reach a more judicious attitude towards erroneous religious beliefs and enable us to distinguish between genuine religious conclusions and those arrived at by merely scientific and purely empirical advance in knowledge. Objectivity and truth are for him all-important. He quotes with approval Plato's frequent demand that a philosopher should be 'the most committed servant of the truth', and he himself asserts that no one with understanding of religious history will 'question the extent to which undefiled religion puts a premium on integrity and love of truth' (p. 115). He has little use for those who regard religion as a very desirable aesthetic extra even if it has no basis in a reality—a reality positive and not negative, actual and not abstract.

His chapter on 'Religious Experience' is particularly good and his treatment of the problems of dogma and authority is very relevant to the need of the present day if religion is to regain the hold which the advance of scientific study has apparently weakened in some quarters. He warns us against the danger of allowing religious practices to degenerate into magic and of rashly discrediting on religious grounds plain facts of history; but on the other hand he claims that religious insight may enable us to discern the true significance of a series of historical events. He realizes the urgent need for modernization of traditions and symbols, but cautions against excessive haste in giving a 'new look', lest the true value which emerges from the past may be lost. He denies the necessity of 'preternatural' experiences and states his conviction that it is possible that a 'devout person of profound religious insight' may not have had any such experiences (p. 213).

Probably the discussion of miracles and of the efficacy of petitionary prayer is one of the most valuable portions of what is throughout a very inspiring and helpful book. The author confesses that he does not belong to the school of strict orthodoxy in regard to miracles, and he calls for honesty in regard to petitionary prayer. He says that if a man has difficulty about the answering of petitionary prayer he should not pretend to such a

belief. But he himself is very far from denying the possibility of both elements in religious faith. The important thing is that we should realize that prayer is not something in which we take the initiative, but is a 'live communion with God'. We should beware of thinking that petitionary prayer provides us with a kind of 'Aladdin's lamp' or that it is like pressing a button and then listing our requirements. We should admit that many petitionary prayers are entirely selfish and unworthy. But if we can realize the central element in Christian faith, and understand and accept the meaning of the personal relationship which Jesus has established in the world, can become aware as our author puts it (p. 274), that Jesus 'provides a focus for the process of divine intervention as a whole' it should not be difficult to believe that He may deal intimately with individuals, not by favouritism (as is suggested in some crude attempts to establish the resultant of petitionary prayer) but in the way which is necessitated by His intimate concern for the individual, who is precious in His sight as an individual *along with* his individual needs.

W. S. URQUHART

*Major Religions of the World*, by Professor Marcus Bach (Abingdon Press; \$1.00), is a slight but useful book, which is better in breadth than in depth, and is journalistically interesting rather than scholarly. It gives a sketch of the religions of the world which will be of great value to those of the Christian community who are just awakening to the idea that there are other religions besides our own, that there are elements of good in all of them, and that if we try to sit where their worshippers sit, we shall be able both to understand them better and to appreciate more fully the treasures that are in Christianity. Dr. Bach makes sometimes certain dogmatic statements which are hardly sufficiently grounded, in his anxiety to find parallels he overlooks differences and he is apt so to concentrate on one idea that it ceases to be adequate. He is particularly good on Confucianism and its relation to Taoism, and he gives a beautiful description of Islam although it hardly carries conviction in every respect. He ends with an earnest appeal to Christians to make their own faith real, to be ready to learn from other faiths, but above all to appreciate the influence for good which Christianity has exerted upon the religions with which it has come into contact. Thus as a final result depth wins the victory over breadth, and devotion over the acquiring of general information.

Dr. Arthur Guirdham is already known by his excellent volume on 'A Theory of Disease',



volume which had for its thesis that disease is the total response of the whole personality; and that our type of personality is correlated with the kind of disease to which we fall victims. He believes that our personalities are largely formed by our religious and philosophical outlook. Although that theme runs through the pages of this later volume—*Christ and Freud* (Allen and Unwin; 21s. net)—his main concern is with 'the question of psychiatric factors in religion and conversely religious factors in psychiatry'. Sooner or later religion has to come to terms with psychiatry and psychiatry with religion. He has little difficulty in disposing of Freud's thesis that religion is the 'Universal obsessional Neurosis'. As a matter of fact Freud knew nothing of religious experience, and was more concerned with its public rites. Still it was Freud who first showed the religious aspects in mental illness. We have excellent sections dealing with this relationship. He defends mysticism: 'Hysteria is essentially an escape from reality, whereas mystical experience is a conviction of it'. After summarizing the fallacies in the psychoanalytic explanation of religion we get some interesting reading on 'Christianity and Neurosis', 'Guilt and Clericalism', 'Freedom and Captivity'. He is rather hard on theology. 'Religion is not to be established by any form of theorizing'. No, but theorizing can confirm experience. There is no experience which does not involve a cognitive element. True religious experience, he believes, comes by self-annihilation. Hence his emphasis upon religions of the East. In spite of this he believes that Christianity is the religion for the West, and by implication the one likely to become universal. Although the volume will be valuable to the minister, psychiatrist and theologian, the layman will derive great benefit from reading it. It is a worthy successor to 'A Theory of Disease' in spite of a somewhat obsessive criticism of theology. There are printer's errors on pp. 82, 132, 145, 153.

For sixteen years Prebendary George Saywell, as ecclesiastical correspondent of 'The Times', wrote one religious article a month, and was responsible for the selection and editing of the other Saturday articles. A selection of these articles covering the years 1939 to 1945 has now been published under the title of *Christian Confidence* (James Clarke; 12s 6d.).

These articles are necessarily dated, because they were written with the War as their background. They are necessarily limited in their appeal for they are written almost entirely for Anglicans, being frequently based on the reading or the collect for the following Sunday. They read rather like

religious leading articles and therefore tend to pious and ecclesiastical platitude.

Many studies of John Calvin and of aspects of his teaching have appeared in recent years, but none is more likely to attract the general reader than the latest—*Calvin*, by Dr. Emanuel Stickelberger (James Clarke; 13s. 6d. net).

The appeal of this book lies partly in the English translation by Dr. D. G. Gelzer, which is clear and readable, partly in the fact that Calvin, whether for attack or defence, seems to be a subject of perennial interest, but chiefly in the personality and literary skill of the author. No theologian or ecclesiastical statesman, he is an eminent Swiss poet and man of letters who has studied Calvin and much that has been written about him and, having formed his own impression of the great Reformer, has set it forth with simplicity and charm. We commend his work, for though it is popular in the best sense, its documentation, bibliography, and index are remarkably full. It casts a vivid light on the age of the Reformation, and it is a worthy attempt to do justice to a man who, more than most, has earned the blessing promised to those against whom men say all manner of evil falsely for Christ's sake.

*The Life of Rowland Taylor, LL.D.—Rector of Hadleigh in the Deanery of Bocking*, by the Rev. William James Brown (Epworth Press; 21s. net), is a worthy biographical tribute to one of the minor figures of the English Reformation.

A Cambridge man, like so many others of like views at that period, Taylor was a lawyer and a married man before receiving ordination. Becoming chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer and Rector of Hadleigh, he was much used by the Archbishop in duties for which his legal training was an asset. He refused to flee or to recant in Queen Mary's reign and was burnt on Aldham Common in 1555. We are grateful to the present rector of Hadleigh for this scholarly and sympathetic portrait of an English churchman and martyr.

*Friendship*, by Miss Eveline Holmes (S.C.M.; 6s. net), can be commended as a guide to the problems of human relationships. Miss Holmes deals with relationships within the family, between adolescents, among women, between men and women, between enemies, and in a working group. Clearly she has learned much from Florence Allshorn; and her approach to the task of making such relationships creative is marked by unsentimental directness and Christian understanding. This is a book which may speak to the condition of almost every one.



# Christian Morality and the Idea of a Cosmic Fall

BY JOHN WREN-LEWIS, B.Sc., A.R.C.S., LONDON

IT is a safe guess that the idea of the Fall nowadays suggests to ninety-five per cent. of people in this country who recognize the term at all, the Fall of Man, or of Mankind. This is only half of what the term meant for the Early Church, however, and I want to try to show in this article that this dilution of the Biblical idea of the Fall has had the most damaging consequences for Christian morality. Indeed, I believe that in almost every case where good and sensitive people outside the Church reject Christian teaching as inhuman, neurotic, reactionary or obscurantist, it is because that teaching has been distorted by inadequate understanding of the doctrine of the Fall.

What is left out in the common understanding of the doctrine is the notion, perfectly clear in the Bible, that Nature as well as man is fallen. The effect of forgetting this is to make us assume that Nature, apart from human interference, is a direct expression of the will of God, and so to make every attempt to change the course of Nature appear morally suspect, if not downright sinful. There is no need to elaborate upon the enormities that have been committed by religious people in the past in the name of this principle. To-day it is exemplified on a world-wide scale in the Roman Catholic attitude to birth control, which rests primarily upon the notion that because conception is linked with sexual intercourse by Nature, therefore procreation must be the divine purpose for sex, and any interference with this process must be wrong.

Protestants who seek to oppose Rome in this matter very rarely penetrate to the heart of the question. They see so clearly how inhuman the consequences of the Papist policy can be, that they tend just to deplore it, saying 'Of course God cannot want the world peopled by starving millions,' or something of that sort. This leaves them wide open to the charge that they are watering down the Faith to pander to human prejudice, whereas in truth this is the very charge which they should be levelling at Rome.

Even in the carefully-considered and (from the point of view of Church History) monumental recommendations of the Lambeth Conference of 1958, this point is not really fully grasped. The

Report of the committee on 'The Family in Contemporary Society' argues very soundly that the traditional emphasis on procreation as the primary and overriding purpose of marriage has sprung from fears and prejudices that have nothing to do with Christianity:

'... it is clearly not true that all other duties and relationships in marriage must be subordinate to the procreative one. Neither the Bible nor human experience supports such a view. Where it has been held, the reason generally lay in a fear of the misuses of the sexual relationship or in a false sense that there is, in any sexual relationship, an intrinsic evil. Neither fear nor a false sense of what is "evil" is a helpful guide for humanity, in this or any other matter.'

This is well said—but on the vital issue the Committee remained half-hearted. Commenting on the traditional idea that procreation is 'the ruling purpose' in marriage, the Report says: 'So it is, in the sense that no marriage would be according to God's will which (where procreation is possible) did not bear fruit in children'. But by what authority is this statement made?

It is certainly not based on the teaching of Jesus, which, as the Report itself admits, 'deals directly only with the personal relationship between husband and wife'. The authors of the Report quote the early passages of the Book of Genesis as suggesting that God means the procreative process to be seen as an analogy to, or an expression of, His own creativeness, but this is an extremely dubious piece of exegesis. It seems most likely that the writers were still hamstrung, in spite of their excellent intentions, by the notion that something so firmly rooted in Nature as the connexion between sex and procreation *cannot* be wrong, whereas a genuinely theological view of the matter, based on a full doctrine of the Fall, would demand that *every* apparently natural connexion should be called in question, just as the apparently natural connexion between pneumonia and death has actually been called in question by Christian doctors who use penicillin.

The principle of calling Nature in question, especially in relation to fertility, might almost be called the basis of Biblical religion: the idolatrous



practices from which Israel was constantly having to be recalled in the Old Testament were almost always forms of Nature-worship, usually involving fertility cults of one kind or another. Right from the beginning of Israel's history, in fact, it was recognized that there must be a disjunction somewhere between Nature as ordinarily experienced and God, if God was indeed the infinite power of justice, mercy, beauty and love whom the Jews firmly believed they knew. For the natural world as ordinarily experienced knows nothing of justice, still less of mercy; if it is often beautiful, it is equally often horrible—horrible in cruelty, in waste and in sheer monstrosity; and its 'love' is concerned wholly with indiscriminate propagation, with no regard whatever for individuals.

What is more, the Jews of the later Old Testament period were quite sophisticated enough to see that most of the things in human life which were known to cut men off from God are intimately bound up with the order of sub-human Nature. It was at this point that Israel faced most acutely the temptation, to which so much Eastern religion had succumbed, of regarding the material world as inherently evil in itself, and attributing all human evil to the fact that the souls of men have somehow got themselves imprisoned in material bodies. The temptation was resisted: the Jews declared firmly that the material world is as much God's creation as the spiritual world. (It seems likely, from modern scholarship, that the Book of Genesis was written at this period of Jewish history with this precise purpose, framed as a direct counterblast to the Babylonian creation-myths which ascribed the origin of the material world to dark forces.) Later on, the Christian Church had to make the same declaration of faith in opposition to the various 'gnostic' heresies, and later still in opposition to Manicheism. But resistance to these ultra-ascetic, world-denying and body-denying dualistic cults did not imply, for the Jews or for the New Testament Christians, any simple acceptance of Nature as directly expressive of God's will. Some of the Greek and Latin Fathers may have thought this, and by the time the struggle against Manicheism began in the Middle Ages it became the widespread view of Catholic orthodoxy, but for the Jews (and the early Christians, who inherited the Jewish insight undiminished by the confusions of Greek culture) any such simple acceptance of Nature would have meant going back on a conviction even more fundamental than the one they were seeking to maintain against the dualists.

It is important to be quite clear about this, because it is common practice amongst Roman apologists to-day to represent their position as the only alternative to, and the only safe bulwark

against, life-denying puritanism. (Indeed, the claim is not confined to Papists: it is made also by Mr. C. S. Lewis, who would probably not describe himself as even an Anglo-Catholic. In his novel *That Hideous Strength* Professor Lewis lumps together birth-control and vivisection as the first stages on a road of life-denial that ends, in his view, with hatred of all organic life.) This is a particularly pernicious misrepresentation, a lie which is long overdue for nailing.

Actually the great triumph of the Bible is that it shows the way between the horns of this dilemma of accepting Nature as the will of God or rejecting it as a work of the devil—for both horns are equally wounding for humanity. In some respects, indeed, the alternatives are (to change the metaphor) only opposite sides of the same coin, for both in their way deify the order of Nature as we ordinarily know it, even though in one case this order is ascribed to a good God and in the other to an evil one. Both views, in other words, have the effect of denying the possibility of making the material-biological order of the world subserve men's intuitions of love and beauty in the personal life; dualistic heresy denies that physical existence can ever be compatible with these intuitions, while the 'Catholic' form of world-acceptance denies that the intuitions have any moral validity if they are at variance with the order of Nature. Moreover we now know, from psychoanalysis, that this practical equivalence of the two apparently opposed points of view extends into the psychological sphere as well. Underneath the hearty emphasis on 'Nature' (and particularly the emphasis on procreation) which characterises certain forms of so-called 'incarnational orthodoxy' there usually lies a concealed horror of physical life, finding its disguised outlet in the conviction that all physical enjoyment needs to be justified by rigid subordination to natural ends beyond itself.

The truly Biblical doctrine is that the physical world of Nature is *basically good but distorted by sin*, in very much the same way as human spiritual nature is, so that Nature and mankind *both* stand in need of, and are capable of, redemption. The whole apocalyptic tradition in the Old Testament expresses the hope that God will in fact redeem the natural world as well as man: Isaiah even goes so far as to prophesy a redemption of the earth in which animal instincts will be radically altered. This may seem incredible to-day, but that is another matter, to which I shall return in a moment: the point I want to make here is that it is hard to see how this notion of a redemption of Nature can be rejected, or dismissed as 'mere poetry', without rejecting the Biblical faith as a whole. Certainly if faith in the resurrection of Christ's body is maintained it is hard to see on



what grounds the possibility of the redemption and 'humanization' of other parts of the natural material creation can be discarded.

But this brings me to the second point I want to make about the Biblical view of Nature, which is that it is suggested in several places in the Bible that Nature as we know it is distorted (one might almost say, 'unnatural') *because of man's sin*. In the Fall-story of Genesis, for example, it is plainly stated that God creates man to have dominion over organic Nature, and that man's failure to live by God's law in his personal relationships brings about a loss of this dominion, so that the very ground appears as if cursed. A Jewish commentator on the Old Testament doctrine expresses it by saying that man is the coping-stone of the whole arch of Nature, so that his defection from God's purpose brings the entire erection down in ruins, and the Nature we now see is no more than 'a grimace on the face of Eden'. This, it seems to me, is certainly the view which the New Testament writers took over when they sought to state the Christian hope in the light of Christ's resurrection. The whole creation, St. Paul asserts, is in a state of bondage, 'groaning and travailling' until it is released *by the redemption of man's physical nature*.

Can we seriously believe this to-day? I believe we can. I believe modern science, so far from making it more difficult to believe than it was in ancient times, actually makes it easier. For 'calling Nature in question' was never easy: the natural world as a whole seems at first sight remarkably indifferent to human values, and formidably self-contained. It required just as great an act of faith to challenge it when it was thought to be run by demons and astrological powers as it ever could when it was thought to be a great machine—indeed these two ideas are really also opposite sides of the same coin. But to-day science has driven us to recognize that the natural world is not self-contained at all. The pictures we make of it as a great system over against ourselves are only abstractions, and to identify them with reality is to lapse into illusion, whether the picture is a purely mechanical one or one involving the workings of supposedly spiritual powers. The real universe that we actually know in experience, as I argued in my previous article in *THE EXPOSITORY TIMES*,<sup>1</sup> is always *contained within* the universe of persons-in-relationship, and we ought no more to be overwhelmed out of this knowledge

by the apparent size and indifference of the world we picture 'outside' our human universe than we are by the idea that there are billions of molecules carrying speech between us. Modern science actually forces us to recognize this more and more, first by emphasizing with its paradoxes that our pictures of the Universe as a system *are* abstractions, and, secondly, by suggesting (in such modern developments as 'communication theory') that the reality from which the abstractions are made *is* precisely that of persons-in-relationship.

What is more, modern physiology gives plenty of ground for believing that man's conduct of his personal life can have enormous effects upon the physical operations of his body. If this is so, it is not at all hard to believe that the redemption of human relationships makes radical changes in the mode of bodily functioning possible, and if we maintain a proper perspective of the universe as a whole it is not inconceivable by any means that the changes might spread out far wider, beyond mankind altogether. The prospect remains a mystery, as it always was, but this mystery, and nothing less, *is* the Christian faith, and I believe it becomes more rather than less credible in the light of modern discoveries.

I also believe it is more than ever necessary to-day that this faith should be proclaimed in the world, when men are beginning to learn, through the application of science, to manipulate the natural order: they need to be shown that this manipulation, far from being a demonic exercise of pride or even a hopeless struggle against an ultimately supreme Nature, is really nothing less than the fulfilment of man's divine vocation. It carries, of course, immense possibilities for evil as well as for good, but that does not mean that the vocation ought to be refused—indeed, to refuse it is to capitulate outright to the Prince of this World. Man's true task is to accept it, under God, so that the redemption of his personal life which Christ made possible goes hand-in-hand with the transformation of Nature to the true service of beauty and love.<sup>2</sup> In this work it is equally wrong to rely exclusively on technology to perfect life *or* to concentrate exclusively on the sanctification of persons. Ultimately Nature and man are a single creation, and the work of restoring that creation to its true nature as a realm of finite persons growing in love is one which has to be tackled in every way possible at every opportunity.

<sup>1</sup> 'Science and the Doctrine of Creation' [December, 1959].

<sup>2</sup> For further development of this theme, see my article 'A Vindication of Romance' in *The Listener* [October 1, 1959].



# Hellenistic Thought in New Testament Times

## The New Emphasis

BY THE REVEREND WILLIAM BARCLAY, D.D., THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW

IN the fourth century B.C. Greek thought and philosophy acquired an almost completely new emphasis, and it was an emphasis which was to remain and still further to develop in the centuries to come. The earliest Greek philosophy had been speculative; its great interest had been cosmology; the question which its exponents had sought to solve was the identity of the one element out of which all things in this world and the world itself were formed, and to which they would return.

Thales, who flourished about 620 B.C., found that one element in water; all things are from water and all things are resolved into water.<sup>1</sup> Anaximander, who flourished about 600 B.C., found the one basic element in *to apeiron*, the infinite, the unlimited, infinite and undetermined matter. Diogenes Laertius says: 'He laid down as his principle and element that which is unlimited, without defining it as air or water or anything else'.<sup>2</sup> Anaximenes, who flourished about 550 B.C., found the one basic element in air, out of which all things were generated by condensation and rarefaction, the first involving cooling and the second heating.<sup>3</sup> Xenophanes and the Eleatics found the one basic substance in *to on*, the stuff of being.<sup>4</sup> Heraclitus, who flourished about 500 B.C., found the one basic element in fire. 'All things are compounded of fire and into fire again they are

resolved.' Fire by contraction turns into moisture; moisture by condensation turns into water; water by congealing turns into earth.<sup>5</sup> Eusebius quotes Atticus as saying: 'It is known that Thales and Anaximenes and Anaxagoras and as many as were contemporary with them spent their time solely on the inquiry concerning the nature of existing things'.<sup>6</sup> Early Greek philosophy was deeply concerned with cosmological speculation; it was natural philosophy.

With the coming of Plato and in the time of Aristotle there was a difference. Zeller sums up the difference: 'Philosophy, as Plato apprehends it, is the elevation of the mind towards true reality—the scientific cognition and moral exposition of the idea. Finally, Aristotle still further limits the sphere of philosophy by wholly excluding from it practical activity.'<sup>7</sup>

Philosophy began by being cosmological speculation; it went on to be concentrated mental activity, especially in connexion with the ultimate causes of things; in neither case can it be said to be bound up with the daily business of life and living.

But then there comes the difference. Epicurus defines philosophy as 'the daily business of speech and thought to ensure a happy life'.<sup>8</sup> It is his claim that 'through love of true philosophy every disturbing and troublesome desire is ended'.<sup>9</sup> When Diogenes of Oenoanda left his record of the teachings of Epicurus recorded on the great wall inscription in his home town he called them 'the medicines of salvation', and declared that he set them out before men that they might have 'joy with good spirits'.<sup>10</sup> Epicurus himself laid it

<sup>1</sup> Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 40–50; Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, i. 211–227; Diogenes Laertius, i. 27; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i. 3, 983 b 20; Cicero, *Academics*, ii. 37; Justin Martyr, *Address to the Greeks*, 5; Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, i. 8, vii. 12, xiv. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 50–71; Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, i. 227–266; W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, i. 154–161 [Eng. tr.]; Diogenes Laertius, ii. 1; Aristotle, *Physics*, iii. 4, 203 b 10; Cicero, *Academics*, ii. 37; Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, i. 8, xiv. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 72–79; Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, i. 266–280; Diogenes Laertius, ii. 3; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i. 3, 984 a 5; Cicero, *Academics*, ii. 37; Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, i. 8, vii. 12, xiv. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, i. 533–642; Cicero, *Academics*, ii. 37; Diogenes Laertius, ix. 18; Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, i. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 130–168; Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, ii. 1–104; Diogenes Laertius, ix. 7; Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, i. 3, 384 a 7; Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, vii. 12, xiv. 14; Clement of Alexandria, *Exhortation to the Greeks*, v.

<sup>6</sup> Eusebius, *The Preparation for the Gospel*, xi. 2.

<sup>7</sup> Zeller, *Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, i. 2, 3.

<sup>8</sup> Sextus Empiricus, *Adversus Mathematicos*, xi. 169.

<sup>9</sup> Epicurus, *Fragment 66*. The *Fragments of Epicurus* are cited according to the numbering of Cyril Bailey, *Epicurus, the Extant Remains*.

<sup>10</sup> Diogenes of Oenoanda, ed. I. William [Teubner], *Fr. 2*, col. v. 14–vi. 1; *Fr. 1*, col. iii. 8, 9.



down : ' Vain is the word of a philosopher which does not heal any suffering of man ; for, just as there is no profit in medicine, if it does not expel the diseases of the body, so there is no profit in philosophy either, if it does not expel the suffering of the mind '.<sup>1</sup> ' Men ', said Epictetus, ' the lecture-room of the philosopher is the hospital of the sick soul ',<sup>2</sup> and in his translation W. A. Oldfather adds a note that over the doorway of one of the great libraries of Alexandria there were inscribed the words ' The hospital of the soul '. Seneca declared that in his day all philosophy *ad salutem spectat*.<sup>3</sup>

We have come a long way from the time when philosophy was dedicated to cosmological speculation, or when it was solely a strenuous exercise in mental activity. Now philosophy has become the power by which a man lives, and the power in which he prepares himself to meet the possibility of dying ; we must see the factors in life and history which brought about this change.

It was an age suffering, in Gilbert Murray's famous phrase, from ' the failure of nerve '. ' It is the old difference between Philosophy and Religion, between the search of the intellect for truth and the cry of the heart for salvation.' ' The Porch (that is, Stoicism) and the Garden (that is, Epicureanism) offered new religions to raise from the dust men and women whose spirits were broken.'<sup>4</sup> What were the shattering experiences which made men seek for help wherever they could find it ?

1. The process began with the campaigns of Alexander the Great. For the Greek the most fundamental effect of these campaigns and victories was that they brought about *the end of the city state*. To the Greek the city of which he was a citizen was life and the whole of life. To the Athenian Athens was the supreme fact in life. Aristotle, for instance, based his social theory on the *Polis*, the city, not the nation.<sup>5</sup> After the conquests of Alexander the city state no longer existed ; the Greek had lost his moorings ; he had become like a strayed child lost in the crowd of a world empire. It would be true to say that the city state had been the true religion of many a Greek. If a man's god is that to which he gives his love and devotion and service and thought, then for the Greek the city of which he had been a member had been divine. The conquests of Alexander brought all that to an end. Perhaps the

nearest modern parallel would be the condition of a man who had given all his time and thought and devotion to the Church, and who woke up one morning to find that the Church no longer existed. The foundations were not so much shaken as destroyed. The great world empire wiped out the city state, and life for the Greek no longer had any focus or centre.

2. If men needed support for their souls in the days when the empire of Alexander was enveloping the world in its embrace, still more did they need it in the days when Christianity came into the world. Tacitus began his *History* with the year A.D. 69, and almost at the beginning of it he writes :

' I am entering on the history of a period rich in disasters, frightful in wars, torn by civil strife, and even in peace full of horrors. Four emperors perished by the sword. There were three civil wars ; there were more with foreign enemies ; there were often wars which had both characters at once. . . . Rome was wasted by conflagrations, its oldest temples consumed, and the Capitol itself fired by the hands of citizens. Sacred rites were profaned ; there was profligacy in the highest ranks ; the sea was crowded with exiles, and its rocks polluted with bloody deeds. In the capital there were yet worse horrors. Nobility, wealth, the refusal or the acceptance of office, were grounds for accusation, and virtue ensured destruction. The rewards of the informers were no less odious than their crimes ; for while some seized on consulships and priestly offices, as their share of the spoil, others on procuratorships, and posts of more confidential authority, they robbed and ruined in every direction amid universal hatred and terror. Slaves were bribed to turn against their masters, and freedmen to betray their patrons ; and those who had not an enemy were destroyed by friends '.<sup>6</sup>

These indeed were times to try the souls of men.

It was a time of violence. Of the first twelve Emperors seven died violent deaths. It was a time of absolute power irresponsibly used. When Antonia, the grandmother of Caligula, dared to give him some advice, his answer was : ' Remember that I have the right to do anything to anyone'.<sup>7</sup> The old aristocracy came near to being wiped out. In the proscription of the second triumvirate three hundred senators and two thousand knights perished.<sup>8</sup> In the time of Claudius thirty-five senators and three hundred knights were executed.<sup>9</sup> Of the time of Tiberius Suetonius says : ' Not a day passed without an execution'.<sup>10</sup> It is true that Caligula was a more

<sup>1</sup> Fragment, 54.

<sup>2</sup> Epictetus, *Discourses*, III. xxiii. 30.

<sup>3</sup> T. R. Glover, *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire*, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* [*The Thinker's Library*], 123, 117, 114.

<sup>5</sup> Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, 127.

<sup>6</sup> Tacitus, *The History*, i. 2 (the translation is that of A. J. Church and W. J. Brodribb).

<sup>7</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Cæsars* : *Caligula*, xxix.

<sup>8</sup> Appian, iv. 5.

<sup>9</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Cæsars* : *Claudius*, xxix.

<sup>10</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Cæsars* : *Tiberius*, lxi.



than half-mad epileptic, and that his conduct was the conduct of a man who was deranged, but he held the power and Suetonius writes of him :

'Many men of honourable rank were first disfigured with the marks of branding-irons and then condemned to the mines, to work at building roads, or to be thrown to the wild beasts ; or else he shut them up in cages on all fours, like animals, or had them sawn asunder . . . He forced parents to attend the executions of their sons, sending a litter for one man who pleaded ill-health, and inviting another to dinner immediately after witnessing the death, and trying to rouse him to gaiety and jesting by a great show of affability. . . . When a Roman knight on being thrown to the wild beasts loudly protested his innocence, he took him out, cut off his tongue, and put him back again'.<sup>1</sup>

There were times when anyone who was near the throne could only exist by turning himself into a fawning flatterer or a spiritless lick-spittle. Seneca writes : 'the words of the man who had grown old in doing homage to kings are familiar to all. When some one asked him how he had attained what was so rarely achieved at court, namely old age, he replied : "By accepting injuries and returning thanks for them"'.<sup>2</sup>

In such a society to be distinguished for anything was to be in peril of death. Juvenal writes : 'To be both old and noble has long since become as good as a prodigy'.<sup>3</sup> Corbulo, whose military skill had served Rome so magnificently in the East came to his death in the end, and 'his only crime was his virtue, his wealth and his race'.<sup>4</sup> Nero prided himself on being a poet, and he ordered the epic poet Lucan never to publish his verses, 'determined to silence what he vainly strove to emulate'.<sup>5</sup> To be wealthy was to invite disaster

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, *Lives of the Cæsars : Caligula*, xxxvii.

<sup>2</sup> Seneca, *On Anger*, II. xxxii. 3 (the translation is that of J. W. Basore).

<sup>3</sup> Juvenal, *Satires*, iv. 96, 97.

<sup>4</sup> *Dio Cassius*, lxi. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 49.

so that a rapacious emperor might enjoy still another estate.

Of all the terrors of that time none can have been so terrible as the work of the informers, the *delatores*. The emperors were only too glad to listen, and there were those who were always ready to provide information which would justify another judicial murder. Juvenal speaks of 'Pompeius whose gentle whisper would cut men's throats'.<sup>6</sup> Tacitus describes the notorious Vatinius : 'Of all detestable characters that disgraced the court of Nero, this man was the most pernicious. He was bred up in a shoe-maker's stall. Deformed in his person, he possessed a vein of ribaldry and vulgar humour, which qualified him to succeed as a buffoon. In the character of a jester he recommended himself to notice ; but soon forsook his scurrility for the trade of an informer ; and having by the ruin of the worthiest citizens arrived at eminence in guilt, he rose to wealth and power, the most dangerous miscreant of that evil period'.<sup>7</sup> An informer was entitled to a quarter of the estate of the person against whom he informed, if the resulting prosecution was successful. 'Probably', says Dill, 'in no other way could a man so easily make himself a millionaire'.<sup>8</sup> The principal accuser of Thræsea and Soranus under Nero each received £42,000 as their reward ; Eprius Marcellus and Vibius Crispus amassed gains from informing amounting to £2,400,000.<sup>9</sup> Life became intolerable because of ears for ever listening for anything that could be twisted into a charge, because of whispering tongues, and because of authority which was more than willing to pay for information which would eliminate by foul means those who were above fair attack. In such a time of horror men needed a support for the soul. (*To be continued.*)

<sup>6</sup> Juvenal, *Satires*, iv. 110.

<sup>7</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, xv. 34.

<sup>8</sup> S. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, xvi. 33.

## In the Study

### Virginibus Puerisque

#### No Names, No Phone Call

BY THE REVEREND ROBERT BROWN, B.A., B.D.,  
BLACKPOOL

I wonder how many of you can use the telephone ? The one at home might be easy ; you

just lift the 'receiver' and 'dial' the number ; there is a 'Burr ! Burr !' and, within a few seconds, that seem like minutes, the person you are phoning lifts his receiver, and you can talk away. That is, if you know your friend's number. And if you cannot remember whether it is 53017 or 53071, then you have to look for his name in the telephone book—his surname comes first, and then his



Christian name. But with many of you, it will be his father's name you will be looking for—and you will have to remember whether it is the same as 'Tom's', or whether Tom's father is called William or John or some other name. And how difficult if the surname begins with 'Mac' or 'Mc'—for there are McLeods, and MacLeods, and Macleods—and they all sound alike don't they?

But worse still if the name is Brown or Jones or Robinson—and worst of all—Smith! I counted them all in my telephone directory. There were four and one-third columns of Browns; three and a half columns of Jones; four columns of Robinsons; and eight and one-third columns of Smiths. So if your name is Smith, it is a very popular name. But if you lived in Copenhagen, which is the Capital of Denmark, and your name was Olsen, then you would be one of sixty columns, so many are the Olsens who live there and are on the telephone. Now just a little over twelve months ago all the Olsens were missing! They just disappeared from the telephone directory, so that one would have thought there was not one Olsen left in Copenhagen. And it all happened because a bookbinder had made a mistake. He had left out a whole section of the directory—names, numbers—all had gone. 'It's nice,' one Olsen said, 'the house is quiet. Before the telephone used always to ring in the middle of a television programme.' But all the same it must have been very difficult for people who wanted to speak to a Mr. Olsen and who looked in vain for his name and number in the telephone book.

When Jesus sent out His seventy friends on a mission of preaching and healing, He said to them that they were not to rejoice in their success. 'But', said He, 'rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.' Similarly when Moses prayed for forgiveness for his people he asked God to forgive and then went on to pray—'If not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written'. And the writer of the last book in the Bible, the Revelation, tells of names written in 'the book of life'.

It is the Bible's way of saying that God never forgets one person; God remembers each of us, and what we are and what we do in His service. It is as sure as having one's name written in a book in ink that will never fade. God remembers, and because He is the kind of God Jesus revealed Him to be, we can be quite sure that His memory is one which remembers all that is lovely and best. And our names are in the Book of His Remembrance—there are no missing pages—all the names are there, stored up in His memory and none, not even the least of us, is forgotten by Him.

### History without Tears

By H. F. MATHEWS, M.A., PH.D.,  
KIDDERMINSTER

'Forgetting the things which are behind . . . I press on toward the goal . . . in Christ Jesus.'—Ph 3<sup>13-14</sup> (R.V.).

For the past three weeks I have been visiting every two or three days a certain village school. And a jolly good school it is, too. You should see the amount of work those juniors turn out!

In one of the classes they have been working on a survey of their village. They started by finding out how old the church was, and then trying to discover how the villagers lived five hundred years ago. When they had found it all out, they made a model of it and wrote about it. Then they went on to another century. Last week when I went into the room, one wall was covered with a frieze of 'Our Village in Victorian Times'. There were ladies in crinolines, carriages in the streets, men in top hats.

But on Monday this week a new model was taking shape. Over the top was a heading, 'Our Village in the Twenties'. One boy had been cutting out rounds of cardboard, three inches in diameter, and then other rounds which he had shaped against a halfpenny, and he had joined them together with pipe-cleaners. 'Here,' I said, 'what are these things you have been making?' 'Penny-farthing bicycles, sir,' came the answer. 'But why are you making penny-farthing bicycles for "Our Village in the Twenties"?' 'Well, people rode them then, didn't they?'

I looked at him with that wan look schoolmasters put on sometimes. Then I said, 'Do you think I was alive in the twenties?' 'Oh, yes, sir, of course, sir' (and, between ourselves, I didn't much like the emphasis he put upon that!). 'And do you think I rode one of those penny-farthing atrocities?' 'Well, didn't you, sir?'

I stroked my thinning grey hair and walked away, trying to think of the right reply. Why, the bicycle I ride now is nearly as old as the nineteen-twenties, and I think it is quite modern. One of us—and I don't really know which—has got his history all out of perspective. The 'twenties' to that nine-year-old is a world of the dim, dim past. On the other hand, I can easily forget how much that is new has come into the world since I was a boy.

That is the trouble with many of us when we come to the Bible. We forget that some of its ideas come from very early ages. Elijah thought he could assure all the Hebrews of his day that God was Lord because the sacrifice on a rough



stone altar was struck alight on Mount Carmel; but the God in whom you and I put our trust shows His power and His love in very different ways. The God Amos preached about could 'utterly destroy' sinful people from off the face of the earth; but to us God is the loving Father who wants all the world to become part of His great family.

There were many strange ideas of God way back in the past. Abraham actually thought that God wanted him to sacrifice Isaac! How wrong he was. He had to learn that God could not be honoured by so horrible an act as human sacrifice. Even James and John had so mis-learned the truths of their faith that they wanted to call fire from heaven to consume villagers who would not entertain their Master. We must remember that some things which are quite unworthy have crept into the wonderful book we know as the Bible, because men have not always been able to discern what was God's will for them.

We are still learning more and more of the wonder of the God who created heaven and earth, who is Father and Friend, and King and Captain. And I suppose that, thousands of years hence, people will be saying, 'Isn't it strange that those Christians in the twentieth century had learned so little about God that they still had wars, and allowed millions of refugees to be in want, and quarrelled and told lies and lost their tempers? Why ever didn't they realize what Jesus was teaching by His life and by His death?'

For there is no doubt about it that, however our knowledge of God may grow, however many developing truths the Bible may have to declare to us, it is in Jesus that we find the true meaning of it all.

## The Christian Year

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

### Rational Religion

BY THE REVEREND DAVID H. C. READ, D.D.,  
NEW YORK

'And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them'.—Lk 24<sup>15</sup>.

'While they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near' and said 'Stop reasoning; you mustn't use your minds on sacred things. Faith is all you need'.

Was that what happened? If you remember the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus that first Easter evening, you will know that it

turned out very differently. The Greek word that is used in the narrative is quite unmistakable. It means reasoning, arguing, discussing, disputing—the rational processes of the mind. These two disciples are unknown. What matters is that the Stranger makes no effort to stop the discussion. On the contrary, He joins in. 'Jesus himself drew near, and went with them'.

This is the true picture of the Christian faith. Whenever we genuinely exercise our minds on the great questions of human destiny, whenever we try to puzzle out what the Bible has to say, whenever we take religion seriously enough to try to think it through, Jesus Himself draws near and goes with us.

There are some welcome signs to-day that Christianity is again appealing to the minds of men. Far more books and plays with religious themes are being produced to-day than fifty years ago, and there has been a remarkable revival of concern for the Christian faith in the present student generation. There is a growing recognition that the Christian gospel offers more than an emotional satisfaction; that it offers an interpretation of this mysterious world that is at least as rational as those secular philosophies whose bankruptcy is more apparent every day. The Christ whom we have known to be the Way and the Life, is drawing near again as the Truth that satisfies the mind.

This is to return to the Bible. 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God with all thy mind.' With all its emphasis on the transcendent glory and majesty of God—'as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are . . . my thoughts than your thoughts'—the Bible never crushes the mind with an appeal to sheer irrational belief. 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord.' From the dust of conflict and trial we hear again and again the questions and arguments of the servants of God. We are given without apology the passionate cry of Job, speaking for all anguished minds: 'Oh that I knew where I might find him! . . . and I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments'.

It is sometimes supposed that the Christian Church set out as a group of ignorant men and women with a strong bias against the argumentative Scribes and Pharisees of their old religion and a fear of the rationalism of the surrounding culture of the Greeks. It is supposed that our Lord's appeal to become as children was a rejection of the adult mind, and that St. Paul's remark—'Where is the wise? . . . hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?'—was a blanket condemnation of the intellectual. In fact neither Paul nor his master neglected the method of argument, and they showed the utmost respect for



the serious questioner. We are told very clearly that thinking by itself will not get us into the Kingdom of God, and we are warned against pride of intellect and the folly of mere sophistication. But the New Testament is full of the word 'understand'. The Jews had to be led to understand, to understand how this Jesus is indeed the awaited Christ. And St. Paul would spend hours in a synagogue or by a river-bank patiently seeking to persuade. The voice of the whole thinking world sounds in the reply of the Ethiopian to Philip's question: 'Understandest thou what thou readest?' 'How can I, except some man should guide me?' It was, and is, the task of the Christian Church to be that man.

As the Church gained strength and moved out into the great cities of the ancient world, these men and women, mostly drawn from the poorer and less educated classes, were faced with the towering battlements of pagan philosophy and schools of thought that were at many points dramatically opposed to their dearest Christian convictions. They resolved that the pagan world must not be just out-manoeuvred; nor just outlasted; nor even only out-loved; it must also be out-thought. And so they set themselves to draw out the meaning of the gospel as an entire philosophy of life and to present it to the pagan world as a rational and cohesive whole. With all their imperfections these Fathers of the Church so succeeded in their task that their Christian philosophy was the basis on which European civilization was constructed and for centuries the thinking of the Western world was dominated by the tenets of the faith.

Such a work cannot be done once and for all. Christ inspires new men and women to wage the battle of the reason. Aquinas did it for the Middle Ages and left a mark on the thinking, and therefore the course, of the world for centuries to come. More than anyone else, John Calvin did it for the new age that dawned.

We stand in a tradition of rational religion. That is not the whole story, but it is a part of which we need to be reminded. Every time we are tempted to give up the struggle to make sense of our beliefs in the light of contemporary knowledge, any time we withdraw into a soft and sentimental religiosity, we are betraying the work of our own Christian ancestors.

'And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned . . . ' They are reasoning in the schools of this country. They are reasoning in clubs and apartments, in theatres and libraries, in radio and television. Are we—the Body of Christ—prepared to draw near and go with them? Or do we withdraw, and close up when religion is mentioned because we have not

thought through the reasons for the faith that is in us?

Rational religion? Is it our task to make our religion acceptable to the modern mind, to concentrate on rational arguments? No, indeed: that is *rationalist* religion, which is a very different matter. Rational religion seeks to understand: rationalist religion believes that all our understanding is done with the mind. Rationalist religion is a thin and dry diet for a hungry soul. Christianity is rational, not because you can be argued into accepting it, but because it is prepared to give reasons; and because, once accepted, it offers a more rational view of the world than any rival philosophy.

Once accepted—that is the whole point. We accept some philosophy of life. We can't help it. And, whatever it is, we do not accept it on wholly rational grounds. The most sceptical point of view still demands an act of faith. Atheism requires as much non-rational acceptance as religious belief. Acceptance comes with the presence of that which goes beyond our reason. To go beyond is not to deny: it is only beyond that reason finds its wholeness and its home.

The presence from beyond. There was such a presence on that Emmaus road. But, for the moment, they did not know. Like us they continued the discussion, trying to think their way through.

I have sat through debates and discussions where men of goodwill, but no religious faith, were threshing out the great problems of our destiny. And I have been aware of a presence from beyond, yet 'their eyes were kept from recognizing Him'. Sometimes it is we ourselves, through our weakness and folly, who get in the way. Sometimes it is because men walk with the blinkers of rationalism and are blind to all the other avenues of truth that impinge upon the human spirit. They become insensitive to the Presence. And yet this is the logical end of the rational process—the recognition of the boundaries no mind can cross, the humble waiting for the word from the other side.

It sometimes happens that such a word comes to us from an unexpected direction. A familiar verse of the Bible takes on new meaning; the chance remark of a friend opens a little door in the mind; an unaccountable instinct leads us to worship where we have not been before. The Stranger is drawing near. This is the moment when the merely rational is transfused with a stronger light—and it is a moment that we must not lose.

'He made as though he would have gone further. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent'.



Perhaps it is when we begin to realize that the day is far spent that we begin to need that Presence most. But any time—and the sooner the better—we can detain the Stranger and invite Him in.

What was the end of this long road of discussion and debate? A very simple meal. 'And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.*'

This is the Light that breaks in on our perplexities and discussions. It is not a glaring and blinding light that reduces our reasonings to nonsense and evokes a quite irrational response. It is the Light that comes when talk is through, when we have reached the borders of our human thinking, and are ready to acknowledge the presence of the beyond.

This is the Christ of God—the source of all wisdom, the light in which we see light—who comes in the simple elemental things—a song, a prayer, a handclasp, a cup of coffee, a loaf of bread—to open to us a Kingdom that lies beyond the limits of our minds.

#### SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

##### A Communion Address

BY THE REVEREND R. WATSON MATHEWSON,  
B.D., S.T.M., EDINBURGH

'Ye have not, because ye ask not'.—Ja 4<sup>2</sup>.

An elderly lady was telling me the other day of a minor dilemma in which she had found herself. She had been raking through the contents of a bureau drawer, when she had found a sovereign, and this just the day after a dealer had called inquiring if she had any old gold for sale.

Now a sovereign has some small antique value, and a sentimental value, but it certainly has no purchasing value as long as it remains forgotten at the back of a drawer. Accordingly, was she to sell it, or was she to retain it?

Her dilemma set me thinking of the hundreds of other golden sovereigns that must be lying largely forgotten among old keys and medals in bureau drawers, and then by free association of the multitudes of *golden texts*, as we used to call them when I was at Sunday school, which must be stored away, their purchasing power unrealized, in the minds of many men and women brought up in Christian homes.

For the promises of God are the coins of His realm. But their value is only antique or sentimental until that moment when we spend them and turn them into living experience.

One such golden coin is that tremendous Divine promise—'Ask, and ye *shall* receive'. I have a feeling, however, that for many this promise is so extravagant in its undertaking that although we don't consciously disbelieve it, we discount it. But what if in so doing we miss one of the greatest experiences in life?

Supposing, for instance, the coin turns up again, as it did with me recently, but this time with the unfamiliar reverse side uppermost—'*Ye have not, because ye ask not*'. Here is something that strikes home not as a future prospect but as a present truth. 'Ask, and ye shall receive'—that opens up an entrancing vista—'*Ye have not, because ye ask not*'—that portrays an impoverished character—possibly our own as we are at this present moment, lacking in faith, lacking in power, lacking in spiritual achievement.

And supposing that this time, instead of burying the golden coin out of sight as the unprofitable servant did with the one talent committed to him, we set this promise of God to work for us in our own experience, what is the result?

Well, I believe the result is a new infusion of the life and power of God into our spirits. And I bring this promise to your attention at a Communion service when as Christians we gather together round our Lord's Table for two reasons. First, there is no promise which more certainly ought to be visibly fulfilled in the fellowship than this. And, second, there is no place where we can know with more confidence that God does give us what we ask for in Christ's name than here at the Table of our Lord. This is where we have the assurance that in St. Paul's words 'All the promises of God in Christ are yea, and Amen'.

In this light, then, think of our text.

It is going to mean most to the man who knows now that the defeat of some particular besetting sin is no longer within the capacity of his will. At one time he believed differently. He believed that it was only a matter of making an effort of will and he would be free. And perhaps at that time he was right, a determined stand against a habit not yet deeply entrenched might have saved the day. But the effort of will was not made and it is beyond him now. 'The evil which I would not, that I do. . . . O wretched man that I am.'

This is no hypothetical case history. We can fit names to it—men and women who have become victims of greed or hate or jealousy or lust or alcoholism or sloth. We have all met them. Indeed, we may have met them in our own hearts. We may even now find ourselves slaves of a soul destroying habit, loathing but incapable of breaking free.



To such the Saviour says to-day, 'You have tried everything, but have you tried *asking*. It is because ye ask not, that ye have not.'

This text will have meaning, too, to the woman hag-ridden by anxieties about herself or about her family. Mind you, all her fears may well be justified. She comes to church and with the others sings,

God is my strong salvation,  
What foe have I to fear?

and she feels herself a hypocrite and her religion a betrayer. So she tries to take herself in hand along the usual lines of suppression and hard work, and outside interests and many self-reminders of the foolishness of her fears. But still they persist.

To such a person the Saviour says to-day, 'You have tried everything, but have you tried asking? It is because ye ask not, that ye have not.' To all the victims of sin and fear, the greatest enemies of the human spirit, this text can be the beginning of a new life, if, quite simply, they take it literally and ask God for what they need most, for power over sin and for freedom from fear. And they can ask for these things without any qualms.

There are some things for which obviously we cannot ask God with the confidence that He will automatically provide them. We may well have qualms as we ask for material things or ask for qualities of character that will boost our own egos, for we are using God for our own purposes. But ask for righteousness, ask that our fears may be swallowed up in an invincible trust in the love and power of God, and these shall be given us now, for it is always His will that we should possess these.

There are two possible objections to this line of thought. I can imagine someone saying—'I have done things and said things and thought things that cannot bear the light of His scrutiny, and that debar me, I feel, from any really *deep* experience of God's power'.

Well, we may all of us have good reason to feel ashamed of laying any claim whatsoever on the goodness of God, remembering how we have ignored it in the past. But notice the text again. It reads, not, 'Ye have not, because ye are unworthy'. Jesus carried out no inquisition into the worthiness of the lame or the paralytic or the blind before He laid His hands in healing upon them. And how often in the very act of healing the assurance was given, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'? And to us if we have the grace to feel ashamed of asking anything of our Heavenly Father the text still wonderfully applies. The forgiveness of God—if we don't have that it is because we don't ask for it.

There is one further objection to this line of thought. I can imagine some one saying—'But I have asked and I have not received'. If *this* can happen then the promise is a counterfeit coin. The countless witnesses to the power of prayer throughout the centuries have been victims of auto-suggestion.

Well, I for one must believe in *the witnesses*, that multitude of men and women who have taken Christ at His word and testify that He has not let them down. The sanest, the most balanced people I know are just such people.

Moreover, I must believe in the *One who makes the promises*. Jesus is so right about everything else; His words and His life have the ring of eternal truth about them. Why should He be wrong here? Why should He so consistently assure us that His Father responds to our asking, if it is not true?

It is for these reasons that we know that the fault must lie in ourselves if we do not receive when we ask.

It may be that when we do ask we don't *really* believe that Christ is willing or able to help us. So Christ has to withdraw from us, as He had to withdraw from one locality, unable to do any mighty work because of our unbelief. Always He asked for faith.

But our failure may also be a failure in commitment. The *committed* Christian soon learns to trust the promises of God. He begins to ask with confidence for whatever he sees he needs for the work of the Kingdom. And if we have lost in our individual lives, or as a church that assurance that those who love the Lord will never lack any manner of good things, now is the time to take that golden coin of promise, and to turn it into experience. Thus we discover with an unshakable and joyful certainty that He is indeed faithful who promised.

#### THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

#### The Book of Ruth

BY THE REVEREND JAMES WRIGHT, M.A., D.D.,  
STEWARTON

Ruth 1-4.

An Israelite family under pressure of famine emigrates to Moab and is welcomed there, hospitably treated, allowed to settle and the two sons by and by marry Moabitish girls. Later, the Israelite woman now a widow and her foreign daughter-in-law, also a widow, return to Bethlehem,



and the Moabitess is given a most friendly reception and before long becomes the wife of the most prosperous Israelite in the place. If, as Keats says, 'sad . . . Ruth . . . stood in tears amid the alien corn', everything was done to make her happy.

This story was said to have taken place in the times when the Judges ruled Israel and it might well have done so. There was not so much prejudice against mixed marriages at that time. But there are elements in the story which make it sure that it was written in a very different age, at a time after the Exile, when there was at least as strong a prejudice against mixed marriages as, in a similar situation, there would be at present.

This must be a story like the very similar one which Jesus told of the Good Samaritan which is explicitly a parable and makes no pretence of being factual. The Jews and the Samaritans then had no dealings one with the other, and certainly not the kind of dealings described in the story.

But if the story of Ruth is not fact, as certainly it is not to be dismissed as fiction. The author was not engaged in writing a romance with a happy ending, the purpose of which was to entertain. He had a much more serious purpose. If it did not happen, in the author's mind it is what ought to have happened. If we have here not history as it was, we have history as it should have been. If the will of God had been done this would have been the true story, the actual course of events. The will of God was not done then and events took a much more tragic course. How much happier and more creditable would the situation in the Middle East have been then—how much happier and more creditable to-day—had the Heavenly Father had His way.

Our Lord's mind followed the same course when He looked down on Jerusalem and wept as He reflected that had they known the things that belonged to their peace and accepted His leading the prospect ahead for them would have been less tragic. Rebecca, the Jewess in Scott's *Ivanhoe*, had seen the fulfilment of His foreboding and sadly sang,

Our fathers would not know Thy ways,  
And *Thou* hast left them to their own.

Likewise, Jesus must have been weeping in our day over the devastated cities and towns of Europe and for the same reason. There would have been no First Great War and no Second, and no prospect of a more terrible one ahead, had the nations of Europe been under the direction of His will and under the control of His spirit.

And as with peoples so with persons. Shake-

speare makes Cardinal Wolsey, when he heard of his approaching doom, say,

Had I but serv'd my God with half the zeal  
I serv'd my king, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies.

And if you and I had known the things that belonged to our peace, and accepted the control of Jesus, we should often not have gone the way we did go, to our own remorse and to the hurt of others, including those we had most power to hurt.

But since it has been so with us time and again, and will be so again, the most important service Christ has rendered us—and He had to die to render it—was to win for us the forgiveness of our sins, the pardon of our constant aberration from His will. The past is past and we cannot recall it. What greater blessing is ours than that we can leave it in His hands to deal mercifully, even fruitfully with it, and be at peace!

We are not, however, entitled to proceed to the conclusion which some have reached, that if only the will of God were always done there would be no tragedy and all would be well. The facts of life don't bear that out nor does the story of Ruth.

That story began with a famine among the Jews which brought the people to starvation. We may assume the cause of the famine was drought, the failure of the rains. That cannot fairly be blamed on human failure. Only He who maketh the rain to descend or not to descend can be held responsible. Later in the story illness falls on Elimelech and on the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi and all three die, and three women are left widowed. Some illnesses can of course be traced to human carelessness and sin but not all. Man is mortal by the Divine decree.

But the story of Ruth does bring out clearly and beautifully that the tragedies, the inevitable tragedies, in human life are only half of God's will—only the beginning not the conclusion of it. There was famine in Israel. Yes—and God was responsible—Yes—but there was plenty in Moab and the Moabites were ready to share that plenty with the starving refugee Israelites and that also was the will of God. And only when you have put alongside the calamity the kindness which brought succour to its victims have you the whole picture of God's will.

It is by the will of God that tempests arise at sea, but also by the will of God that lifeboats and lifeboat men go to the rescue of ships in danger thereby. It is by the will of God that sickness falls on men but also the will of God that doctors and nurses should come to their relief. It is appointed unto men to die, but it was appointed that Jesus



Christ, the Son of God, should come and conquer death, and that His Church and people should carry the Good News of death conquered to all who mourn.

I once saw a picture painted by a great artist. He died without being able to complete it, indeed when it was little more than begun, and it seemed quite ugly and meaningless. Had he lived to finish it it would no doubt have been beautiful and intelligible. When we, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, put the finishing touches to God's dealings with our fellows, the ultimate result may be, as Isaiah says,

Coronals for Coronachs :  
Oil of joy for mourning robes,  
Praise for plaintiveness,

and many a story of grief and shame has the happy ending which God planned from the start.

Life would be a poor thing if we were condemned to be like the crowds at the cinema and football matches—only spectators. Jesus did great things for us—but not the least of these was to call us to be His fellow-workers, His partners in the fulfilment of His Heavenly Father's plans—in short, to do things through us.

#### FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

##### The Door of Faith

BY THE REVEREND H. A. HAMILTON, B.A.,  
BRIGHTON

'He had opened the door of faith'.—Ac 14<sup>27</sup>.

It is no wonder that man has lavished his craft and his art on the making of doors. A door is the scene of so many memorable experiences: the departure, the home-coming, the unexpected stranger, the unforgettable welcome; no wonder the door has been the symbol of our going out and of our coming in. It has of course a special religious significance in our passing from one life to another, and did not Jesus speak of Himself saying, 'I am the door'?

Now a door opens either outward or inward. When Luke spoke of the door of faith being opened, which way did he see it—back to a closed world or out into the open? The voices of the New Testament are unanimous about this; the door of faith always opened outward. To-day the Church is much more ambiguous.

*Shall the Door open Inwards?* You probably recognize the mood in which the call of faith seems to turn men backward into a familiar room. It is a closed room in which the furniture and the

pictures all stand in the 'right places', the places where they have always stood, a room in which the door can be shut fast and the curtains drawn and the world shut out; where we can do what we like doing, with just the people with whom we like to be—a cosy room and so re-assuring. There, all is as we insist it must be; we let the outside world go by. Within, it is an ordered, familiar world. We understand the language of it, know what we owe to it and are clear what we think we believe. In this mood many find themselves clinging to a nineteenth century security. They are used to nineteenth century ideas of progress, prefer the strains of its music and are quick to point out the superiority of its manners. In a time of swift and violent change the instinct of some is to open the door inwards to get back inside the world in which they 'know where they are'.

There is a revival of this mood to-day, and no wonder! The world is frighteningly new. It can never be the same again however much we might wish it could. Freud revealed to us the unconscious and our thinking about the motives of human behaviour can never be the same again. Marx has brought a revolution in man's thinking about economics, and now that the workers know their power, we could not return to the old order even if we would. Einstein has happened, and the march of science, and almost daily it is changing our conception of the world of space and time. It seems almost unsafe to begin to think about this brave new world. So no wonder the door of faith is being opened 'back to the Bible'—as though the Bible were an encyclopaedia containing the answers, or a kind of Moore's *Almanac* about the future. No wonder we are hearing 'back to Mother Church' with its familiar religious lingo or its historic patterns of thought. To such calls many are responding, and the more who do, the more right it seems. For myself I find more cause for encouragement as I find a greater challenge, in the mood of those thoughtful men and women in all walks of life who, aware of the newness of the world, feel they cannot come inside our doors. Those who are 'on the frontier' bravely aware of change and unable yet to hear in the language of the Christian Faith the word that speaks to their condition; these are those perhaps most worth the winning.

*Shall It Open Outward?* How, if the faith is still a going out from the door, and the Bible not an encyclopaedia but a lamp, the Church not a refuge but a base camp, and the nature of belief not a lawyer's deed in black and white but a gentleman's agreement? This is how men have thought of it in the great ages of faith and surely how we must learn to think of it to-day. It is spiritually and mentally exciting to live in a



changing world in which we are exploring with Christ. If the faith with which we are living is true, it is true for the whole of experience. No knowledge can be learned and no ordeal can be faced which will not illuminate the faith, modify and extend it. None of you would want to go on believing in a faith of which that was not true.

Besides it is true not only for the larger world, in which as responsible, thoughtful, individuals we are all deeply involved; it is true for the more intimate personal world. There, too, doors are always opening on new scenes, and there, too, the instinct of some is to close the door on life. They peep only at new experiences and then shut themselves in reassuringly. Some even slam the door defiantly and insist on, what they call, 'living their own life'. But going indoors away from life is always narrowing and leaves men in the end shut in with themselves and shut out from God. Going out into life on the other hand, hazardous though it often is, is the one way in which we can lose ourselves and find God. The 'Leap of Faith', said a recent broadcaster, 'is not into the arms of an all-knowing Church; it is a leap into the unknown with Christ the Lord of the unknown'.

*The Door of Faith.* What, then, is Christian faith? Faith is the response that rises in us when we contemplate, even from afar, the light in the face of Jesus Christ, the event of Christ, the luminous event of His birth and death and resurrection. That event revives or illuminates the soul in us. The luminous dial of a watch needs to be exposed regularly to the light, so that when we are in the dark we know how to measure time; the luminous within—'the light that lighteth every man coming into the world'—is renewed in contemplation of the light which is Christ, so that we can find our way amid the shadows of knowledge, which is always 'in part'. We all go into the dark—that is our destiny; in His light we see light.

Or may we think that faith is the receiving of a key, a master key? With the response that we make to Christ not only is the first door opened that leads us out of ourselves, but, one after the other, more doors are opened. Christ has been called indeed the Clue, or the Key to history. Sometimes the doors are neither easy to find nor to open. You will remember the scene in *Alice in Wonderland*, in which Alice finds herself much too tall to pass through the small door of a room. She has the key, but of what use is it? Fortunately there was the bottle with a magic fluid (did it contain the essence of humble imagination?) which, when she drank, made her shrink until she was no bigger than a little child, and to her delight

found herself able to pass through into further adventures in Wonderland. There are many such doors which only open to those who become as little children and who know that 'Christ leads us through no darker rooms than He went through before'.

What a time to be a Christian! To be called to explore freedom without fear. In this mood faith means

I press God's lamp  
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,  
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.

Faith is the opening outward of each door into life; never losing the Master Key; always renewing the light of the Lamp.

#### FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER

#### The Christian Attitude to Work

BY THE LATE REVEREND JOHN L. RIACH, B.D.,  
EDINBURGH

'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord,  
and not unto men'.—Col 3<sup>23</sup>.

It was the late Professor A. B. Davidson who averred that the greatest of all achievements is to live our ordinary life well. If we are to make anything of these lives of ours which God has put into our hands it is not enough to meet heroically the occasional great crises which descend upon us out of the blue. It is something more subtle and difficult that is demanded of us. It is nothing less than to meet the ordinary problems of daily life successfully. The question is, Can Christianity help us towards this end? Has it really any insight to offer on the things which make up our daily life, and especially the thing which occupies most of our attention day in, day out, namely, work?

One of the most exhilarating experiences that any layman in the Church of Scotland could have gone through in recent years was to attend Kirk Week in Aberdeen. At the section devoted to the study of the problems of Industry and Christianity's bearing upon them managers of business concerns sat side by side with horny-handed workmen drawn from the shipyards, mines, and engineering shops. With a candour and honesty that was uplifting to behold they admitted that there were attitudes to work to-day which were perturbing. There was endless slacking—not just on the part of working men failing to produce as much as they could but also on the part of managers who did not hesitate to take



time off for golf or fishing. They admitted there was far too much concern about financial return. They admitted far too many found their work utterly boring and only began to live when they went home. They came to the conclusion that these attitudes to work constituted one of the major issues of our time. And the question is, Has Christianity anything relevant to say concerning it?

When we study the New Testament we find that the all important thing the Christian Faith has to declare about work is, that no matter what we do to earn a living we should have a sense of vocation concerning it. Perhaps we ought: but, what precisely is a sense of vocation? That is the rub. Our grandparents used to sing a hymn with gusto which ran like this—

God hath given to each his station;  
Some have riches and high place,  
Some have lowly homes and labour;  
All may have His precious grace.

According to the author of that hymn, whatever we do to earn our daily bread we should regard ourselves as having been created by God specifically for that job; and He has called us to do that piece of work and no other. Now, it is true that the Apostle Paul had such a feeling about his apostleship, when he writes: 'When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace'. Likewise there is many a minister in the Church to-day, and many a statesman who have similar convictions about the particular work they are doing. But, what about the host of bookmakers who are threatening to make our land the greatest gambling nation on earth; or, what about the call girls making a living through sexual immorality? How can anyone claim that God created them for their specific type of work? Moreover, what are we to say of the thousands of miners who are in process of being thrown out of work through the closure of pits and who must find work of another kind for which they have no training if they are to keep body and soul together? Can anyone assert that God called them to do mining and no other kind of work? The definition of a sense of vocation about work which we find in the Victorian hymn already quoted does not fit the facts. Another has to be found; and Paul puts his finger on it in this text when he says, 'And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men'.

During the Edinburgh Festival when a famous orchestra plays a symphony of Haydn's in the Usher Hall the strings may have the major part. The musician who plays the flute may only have half-a-dozen notes to play in the whole piece. But no matter how seemingly insignificant his

part, it is absolutely essential if the symphony is to be perfectly rendered. It is precisely the same with work. All useful work is absolutely essential for the well-being of the community, from that of the dustman who prevents the spread of disease by gathering our refuse, to that of the Prime Minister going to a summit Conference to make decisions affecting the destinies of whole nations. God calls each of us to do some piece of useful work for the community; not an evil job of work like bookmaking or prostitution, but a useful one. Once we have made our choice of work, we should regard it as a response to a call from God to us all to do some useful work for the well-being of the community. Is this not Paul's definition of a sense of vocation about our work when he says: 'Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men'?

When we acquire a sense of vocation about whatever useful job we are doing for the community all sorts of things follow. For one thing, there is no slacking. Instead of doing as little as we can for as much as we can get, we put our backs into our task and become like Stradivarius when he says:

If my hand slacks, I should rob God  
Since He is fullest good,  
Leaving a blank behind  
Instead of violins.

For another thing, it is a sense of vocation about our work which makes us put up with all that is involved in it. Behind every appetizing meal laid before us, every polished piece of writing which charms or educates us, every fine performance on the stage, every sermon which moves men's souls, there is a vast amount of industry. Instead of rebelling at it we accept it patiently if the sense of vocation is kept ever alive in us. And again, it is this sense of vocation about work which makes every lay person respond to the Church's call to the laity to witness where they toil by integrating their Christian principles with their work though the cost be indeed dear.

So often we hear of some expert having said the last word on some subject. What men are waiting on is not the last word but the first word on many critical issues. It is not the last word on cancer that suffering men are waiting on but the first word. It is not the last word on world peace that our ailing world longs for but the first word. Nor is it the last word about their work in this difficult industrial age that men stand in need of, but the first crucial word that matters. Has not Christianity given us that first word when it says that the thing that matters about all useful work, no matter what it be, is to acquire a real sense of vocation?



## Recent Trends in Johannine Studies (*continued*)

By PROFESSOR A. M. HUNTER, PH.D., D.PHIL., D.D., MASTER OF CHRIST'S COLLEGE, ABERDEEN.

### IV

THAT the Fourth Evangelist was not so much a historian intent on setting down the precise order of events as a prophet seeking to declare the ultimate truth of history is a verdict which would command fairly general assent. To be sure, the Synoptics, which are commonly regarded as the better historical sources, are not innocent of theological interpretation. Yet difference there is between the Fourth Gospel and the first three, a difference which may be roughly expressed thus: whereas the Synoptists set the theology in a historical framework, St. John sets the history in a theological one—as witness his Prologue which is meant to help the reader to understand the doctrines of his book.

But this does not mean that St. John had no interest in history. For one whose dominant conviction found expression in the formula *ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο*, it was surely very important that what he narrates should really have happened. Does then a real core of history underlie his Gospel?

Here inevitably we encounter the question: Did St. John know and use the Synoptists' work? Since Streeter discussed the question in his *Four Gospels* [1924], the view that the New Testament writings form a documentary series, in literary dependence on one another, has been losing favour; and Gardner-Smith's *St. John and the Synoptic Gospels* [1938] showed how tenuous were the arguments on which Streeter and others relied to prove the dependence of John on Mark and Luke. All we may safely say now is that St. John was generally familiar with the oral tradition which was worked into shape in the Synoptics, but that he went his own masterful way in writing his Gospel. For it is abundantly clear that he had access to traditions about Jesus not known to the first three evangelists. What is the historical value of these special traditions of his?

In a problem like this it is hard to lay down criteria for establishing historical value; but one test at least may be suggested. Where something recorded only in the Fourth Gospel helps to make obvious sense of the story of Jesus as we know it from the Synoptics, we may feel tolerably sure that that something is authentic.

With these prolegomena, we may now set down half-a-dozen examples of the worth of St. John's historical tradition.

It is to St. John we owe the information—

- (1) that two of Jesus' disciples had formerly followed John the Baptist;
- (2) that there was a Judean ministry before the Galilean one;
- (3) that at the Feeding of the Five Thousand Messianic excitement reached a dangerous pitch;
- (4) that there was a later ministry in the south before the Passion;
- (5) that the Last Supper took place before Nisan 15;
- (6) that Jesus appeared before Annas after His arrest.

Let us amplify each of these assertions and defend them.

1. John 1<sup>35-37</sup> tells how two of the Baptist's disciples decided to follow Jesus after the Baptist had given some strong hint that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah.

Now that some of Jesus' disciples had previously followed the Baptist is historically probable. All Christian accounts of Jesus' ministry begin with the Baptist's mission. The baptism of Jesus might account for this; but it becomes easier to understand if in fact several of Jesus' disciples had previously numbered themselves among the Baptist's followers. And their readiness to follow Jesus becomes more natural if John the Baptist had encouraged them to believe that Jesus was 'the coming One'.

This raises another interesting point. According to the Fourth Gospel, the Baptist recognized Jesus as the Messiah almost from the beginning<sup>1</sup>; whereas the Synoptics (Lk 7<sup>18-23</sup>, Mt 11<sup>2-6</sup>, Q) represent him, when imprisoned at Machaerus, sending messengers to ask Jesus if He was indeed He that should come. Is there not here a fatal contradiction between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics? On the contrary, may not the two testimonies, between them, preserve the actual truth? With so much Messianic excitement in the air, is it so unlikely that the Baptist and others at first supposed that in Jesus they 'had found

<sup>1</sup> What did the Baptist mean when he described Jesus as 'the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world'? C. H. Dodd takes the title to mean 'the Messiah who makes an end of sin'. Whether we accept this explanation or not, Andrew's claim 'We have found the Messiah' suggests the thoughts that were running in the Baptist's mind.



the Messiah', but when, with the passage of time and the unfolding of the Galilean ministry, Jesus did not measure up to their ideas of what the Messiah should be and do, their original high hope turned into serious doubt? On such a view, the Baptist's question from prison is completely intelligible—and so is Jesus' reply which, after pointing to His healing miracles as the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, goes on: 'And blessed is he who shall not be offended' <sup>1</sup> ('put off') in me'. 'I am the Messiah', says the Lord in effect, 'but not the kind of Messiah that you, John, and your friends expected'.

2. Eusebius <sup>2</sup> preserves a tradition that St. John wrote in order to record an early period in Christ's ministry not mentioned by the other evangelists. Was there then a ministry in the south before the Galilean ministry?

Consider St. John's record. Some time after his baptism and at 'Bethany beyond Jordan' Jesus met two of the Baptist's disciples whom He added, along with others, to His disciple-band (1<sup>29-51</sup>). Later, after briefly visiting Galilee (2<sup>1-12</sup>), He returned south and went up to Jerusalem at Passover time: there He cleansed the Temple, won many followers and talked with Nicodemus (2<sup>13-31</sup>), before exercising for a time a ministry in Judea parallel to John's (3<sup>22-30</sup>).

This date for the Temple cleansing is of course a difficulty. Whether the Temple was cleansed thus early, may be doubted; but is there any cogent reason for doubting an early ministry in the south? Besides St. John's testimony, we have not only the Synoptic hints that Jesus had visited Jerusalem before His last journey there, but also the implication of Mk 1<sup>14</sup>: 'Now after John had been committed to prison Jesus came *into Galilee*' (cf. Mt 4<sup>12</sup> 'Jesus *withdrew* into Galilee'). Have we not here the reason why Jesus chose Galilee? He had already done enough in the south to run the risk of suffering the same fate as the Baptist.

The whole question was fully and convincingly discussed years ago by Scott Holland.<sup>3</sup> He sums up: 'On every ground, by virtue of all the converging evidences, there had been a ministry in Jerusalem; and the Synoptic Gospels make it certain that this ministry had been attempted before the mission in Galilee had begun. Now it is the Fourth Gospel which alone tells us what this Ministry was, and when it happened'.

3. We turn now to the Feeding of the Five Thousand which was the climax of the Galilean ministry.

<sup>1</sup> To be 'offended' (σκανδαλίζεσθαι) means to be 'put off' rather than to be 'shocked'. See R. A. Knox, *On Englishing the Bible*.

<sup>2</sup> H.E., iii, 27.

<sup>3</sup> *The Fourth Gospel*, 36f.

St. Mark relates that when the feeding was over, Jesus 'at once *compelled* His disciples to embark on the boat and proceed towards Bethany, while He Himself was dismissing the crowd'.

Why did Jesus have to do this? John 6<sup>15</sup> gives the answer: 'Perceiving that they were about to come and kidnap Him in order to make Him King (*i.e.*, King of Israel, Messiah. Cf. Jn 1<sup>29</sup>), Jesus withdrew again to the hills by Himself'.

Here surely is 'the moment of truth'. Once we understand John's comment, the temperature of the whole story suddenly rises, and we begin to realize what was happening. None has taken the point better than T. W. Manson.<sup>4</sup> He points out that 'sheep without a shepherd' means not a congregation without a minister but a nation without a national leader. He notes that Mark speaks of five thousand *men*, as distinct from women and children. Then he goes on: 'What Jesus saw on the shore of the lake was a Maccabæan host with no Judas Maccabæus, a leaderless mob, a danger to themselves and to every one else'. This is why Jesus first compelled the disciples to depart, and then stayed behind to disperse the crowd. It looks as if the sympathies of the disciples were with the crowd rather than with the purposes of Jesus. Now it is a single verse in St. John which supplies the decisive clue here. Surely this is history, if anything in the Gospel records is.

4. As St. John testifies to a preliminary Judean ministry, so in chs. 7-11 he testifies to a later one in the south. Can we accept his testimony?

Many passages in Jn 7-11 suggest that the Evangelist had access to reliable historical information about the last few months of Jesus' ministry. Let the reader re-read chs. 7<sup>10-15</sup>, 25-27, 31-32, 37, 40-52, 820 10<sup>22-24</sup>, 40-42 11<sup>54-59</sup>, and unless he has a hopeless bias against the historical value of the Gospel, he will be compelled to admit that a great deal here is extraordinarily vivid and has the ring of truth. Now, among these veridical passages, we find six notes about Jesus' movements:

7<sup>10</sup>—Jesus went up to Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles.

10<sup>22</sup>—Jesus was teaching in Solomon's porch at the Feast of Dedication, the weather being wintry.

10<sup>40</sup>—Jesus retired to Transjordan.

11<sup>17</sup>—Jesus travelled from Transjordan to Bethany.

11<sup>54</sup>—Because of growing hostility, Jesus retired with His disciples to Ephraim, near the wilderness.

<sup>4</sup> *The Servant Messiah*, 70f.



12<sup>1</sup>—Six days before the Passover He came to Bethany and, the day after, entered Jerusalem.

On the basis of this evidence Goguel,<sup>1</sup> who believes the Johannine historical tradition here to be reliable, suggests the following account of Jesus' movements during the last part of His ministry:

(a) Jesus left Galilee and went up to the Feast of Tabernacles (End of September). (Jn 7<sup>10</sup>)

(b) There He taught for three months until the Feast of Dedication (last week of December). (Jn 10<sup>22</sup>)

(c) Soon after, because of mounting hostility, Jesus retired to Transjordan (Perea). (Jn 10<sup>40</sup>)

(d) Six days before the Passover (*i.e.*, the beginning of April) He returned to Jerusalem. (Jn 12<sup>1</sup>)

Goguel's view has commended itself to a number of good scholars.<sup>2</sup> If he is right, the Fourth Gospel implies a period of six months, including a three months' ministry in Jerusalem, between Jesus' departure from Galilee and the final Passover.

Can this be reconciled with Mark's record? *Prima facie*, the answer looks to be 'No'. After Jesus leaves Galilee, so swiftly does Mark's narrative move that we readily imagine events followed hot-foot on each other and compress the happenings of Mk 10<sup>46</sup>–16<sup>8</sup> into a single week. Did things really happen so? In an important article<sup>3</sup> T. W. Manson has shown that, if we examine Mark's narrative carefully, we shall find that the events related in Mk 10–16 occupied at least *six months*. Note, in particular, the implications of Mk 10<sup>1</sup>: 'He came into the territories of Judea and Transjordan, and there came to Him crowds and again He taught them'.

If we have regarded this as a trip from Galilee to the south with a little teaching by the way, we had better think again. It is the record of a *ministry* in Judea (and presumably in Jerusalem) and Perea, with different groups of people in these districts receiving instruction from the Lord. Thus the time involved (six months) and the territory visited (Judea and Perea) are roughly the same as in John's record.

One more word. It has long been felt that the various Jerusalem controversies between Jesus and the authorities, recorded in Mk 11 and 12, may not have fallen out exactly as they stand now in Mark, *i.e.*, need not all be located in Passion Week. It may now be suggested that some in fact occurred during the three months' ministry in

Jerusalem which preceded Jesus' retirement to Transjordan. Three examples may be cited:

(1) The challenge to Jesus' authority (Mk 11<sup>27ff.</sup>, Jn 7<sup>14ff.</sup>).

(2) The Messiah's Davidic Sonship (Mk 12<sup>35–37</sup>, Jn 7<sup>40–44</sup>).

(3) Jesus in the Treasury (Mk 12<sup>41</sup>, Jn 8<sup>20</sup>).

5. St. John is clear that the Last Supper took place before Nisan 15 (Jn 13<sup>1</sup> 18<sup>28</sup>). Is he right on this point also?

In his *Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [1955] J. Jeremias argued impressively that the Last Supper was a Passover and took place on Nisan 15, which began at sunset. If Jeremias is right about the date, St. John is wrong. But is he? Not a few scholars, while willing to believe that the Last Supper was some sort of Passover (perhaps an anticipated one), are not persuaded that he is. Can we take the matter any further? Following T. W. Manson's lead, Dr. M. Black<sup>4</sup> has recently produced quite convincing evidence that Mark's record of events from the Last Supper to the Crucifixion is also 'telescoped'. As it stands, you get the impression that everything was over in a single night and morning—the Supper, the Arrest, the two Trials, one Jewish and one Roman. On the face of it this seems incredible; and, by appeal to Luke's special Passion-source (a hypothesis accepted by many), Black persuasively suggests that one or even two full days intervened between the Supper and the Crucifixion. Following Mlle. Jaubert, he cites patristic evidence and the calendrical evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls to show that the Passover of Crucifixion year cannot have been observed by all Jews on Nisan 15; since the Qumran sectaries, and possibly the Sadducees, following the old priestly calendar, may have kept Passover earlier than Nisan 15. And, whatever we may have thought about it before, St. John's Last Supper has at least four definitely paschal features. (The meal was held *at night*; the disciples *reclined* at it; a *sop* was given; and there was a suggestion about 'giving something to the poor'.)

Perhaps therefore we should seek a solution to this most complicated of all New Testament problems in the view that the Last Supper was in fact an *irregular Passover* celebrated a day or two before the date laid down by the Pharisees. If this is so, must we not admit that on a further point of history St. John may well be right?

6. Finally, it is probable that in his account of the Trial of Jesus St. John has preserved at least two good historical traditions.

One of the difficulties in Mark's account is his

<sup>4</sup> *New Testament Essays* (in memory of T. W. Manson), 19–33.

<sup>1</sup> *The Life of Jesus*, 238–250, 401–428.

<sup>2</sup> V. Taylor, J. E. Davey, etc.

<sup>3</sup> *B.J.R.L.*, xxxiii. [1950–51] 271–282.



statement that the Sanhedrin met at night to try Jesus. Since nocturnal meetings of the Council were illegal, many scholars believe Luke is right in relating a formal meeting of the Sanhedrin at day-break. But may there not well have been also an *informal* hearing at night? St. John says there was a hearing, and that Annas, the ex-high-priest (and still 'the power behind the throne') presided over it (Jn 18<sup>12-14, 19-24</sup>). There is no reason why this should not be good history, as even Klausner admits.

Our final point has already been mentioned. Pilate's Pretorium, where he tried Jesus, was in the Tower Antonia, as L. H. Vincent's researches have shown.

Enough has been said to show how much good history lies behind the Fourth Gospel. Once again, the question poses itself: How did the Fourth Evangelist come by it, if he was writing in far-away Ephesus and, say, fifty years after the event? Who was the Fourth Evangelist?

## V

In our epilogue we can only glance at this question. But this much may be said. The trend of recent studies has been to make the Evangelist's links with Palestine much stronger than many of us have allowed. Here is a man whose Greek conceals an Aramaic mother-tongue, who writes as if he had known Jerusalem and its environs well, whose cast of mind—witness the Dead Sea Scrolls—is Palestinian, and who obviously had access to some excellent historical traditions about Jesus. Yet his book was written in Ephesus.

If any one is minded to explain, say, the accurate topography by the theory that this Christian from Ephesus had visited the Holy Land in order to identify the sacred sites, he is guilty of anachronism. The destruction of

Jerusalem between 66 and 70 makes it reasonably certain that whoever supplied the topography—not to mention the tradition of Jesus' words and works—must have known Jerusalem and its neighbourhood before A.D. 65.

Could it have been the Apostle John himself? (We agree with W. L. Knox that those who accept the early martyrdom of the Apostle show a quite monumental preference for the inferior evidence.) We cannot disprove it; yet many of the old objections to such a view (the silence of Ignatius, the comparative 'unknownness' of the Gospel in the second century, its contrasts with the Synoptic record, etc.) give us pause. What we may hold *contra mundum* is that the Beloved Disciple was the Apostle John, and that his testimony stands behind the Gospel. But if not the Apostle, why not a close disciple of the Apostle, himself a Palestinian Jew, who, having known the Holy Land in the first half of the century, later made his way to Ephesus? That this man was also the Presbyter of the Johannine Epistles seems also (*pace* C. H. Dodd) reasonably certain. Need we say more—unless we go on to say that the Presbyter must have been Papias's Presbyter John? In that case the Gospel is the Gospel of John the Elder according to John the Apostle.

We call it the Fourth Gospel. But is it literally and chronologically so? We can no longer make John's peculiar phraseology an argument for a late date. The Rylands Fragment has persuaded even Bultmann that a date later than 100 is unlikely. The growing opinion that St. John did not know the Synoptic Gospels means that we need not date the Fourth Gospel, say, ten or fifteen years after them. It might have been written about 80; but then again it might have been written a decade earlier.

## Recent Foreign Theology

**A New Series of Monographs.** A new German series of essays on Theology began to appear in 1958, and already a number of volumes have appeared, of which four have reached the present writer. They are all quite short, containing not more than about fifty pages. The first is by A. Jepsen, and it reviews the changes which have taken place in the focus of interest in Old Testament studies since the days of Wellhausen, and especially the more theological interest which has developed.<sup>1</sup> Much of the study is occupied with the problem of the Canon and what is meant by it.

<sup>1</sup> *Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament* [1958]. *Aufsätze und Vorträge zur Theologie und Religionswissenschaft*, Heft 1. Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, Berlin; DM. 1.80.

For Judaism and for the Early Church the limits of the Old Testament canon were not identical and for the Christian it is part of the canon of the Bible. This at once raises the question whether we should read the Old Testament in the light of the Christian whole Bible, or whether it should be read for itself. That there is a Biblical theology is certainly to be recognized, but there is also an Old Testament theology, which is not to be confused with it, and the more our thought can be clarified on this question the better.

The next study is by E. Fascher, and it examines Is 53 in Christian and Jewish interpretation.<sup>2</sup> The

<sup>2</sup> *Jesaja 53 in christlicher und jüdischer Sicht* [1958], Heft 4; DM. 2.70.



author begins with Ac 8<sup>32</sup>, and examines the interpretation in other passages in the New Testament and the Early Church, as well as Jewish interpretation down to the Middle Ages. He is not concerned with the great variety of modern interpretations, which have sought with widely varying degrees of probability to recover the thought of the writer of the chapter, but he concludes his study with a brief summary of these.

The third study is by G. Baumbach, and is devoted to Qumran and the Fourth Gospel.<sup>1</sup> Here the author deals particularly with the dualism which can be found in the Manual of Discipline and that of the Fourth Gospel, taking due account of the intertestamental writings which were already known before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The links between the Scrolls and the Fourth Gospel have been often noted, and this careful and detailed study of those links is to be welcomed.

The last study is by K.-H. Bernhardt, who considers Form Criticism as an exegetical method in Old Testament study.<sup>2</sup> Here we are brought once more to the question of how far the Old Testament is to be read as a Christian book. That it can have relevance for the Christian only if it is seen to lead to Christ may be agreed, but sound exegesis must read it first for itself and only then for what it has led to. Bernhardt writes critically of Form Criticism, and notes the uncertainty of the definition of many of the forms. Nevertheless, it has played an important part in Old Testament understanding. Green's *Short History* and Reade's *Cloister and the Hearth* belong to two different categories of literature, as every reader recognizes, and it is important for the understanding of the Old Testament that we should recognize the category to which a passage belongs. That this is not the sole clue to its understanding is undeniable. But equally so is it that this has proved a fruitful line of approach.

**Genesis 1-3.** The Czech scholar, Professor M. Bič, has issued in German a little exposition of the first three chapters of the Bible, in which the Biblical order is exchanged for a somewhat novel one.<sup>3</sup> In dealing with creation Professor Bič takes together the verses from ch. 1 and those from ch. 2 dealing with the same stage of creation. This is not because he fails to recognize the duality of

<sup>1</sup> *Qumran und das Johannes-Evangelium* [1958], Heft 6. DM. 2.70.

<sup>2</sup> *Die gattungsgeschichtliche Forschung am Alten Testament als exegetische Methode* [1959], Heft 8. DM. 40.

<sup>3</sup> *Vom Geheimnis und Wunder der Schöpfung: Eine Auslegung von 1. Mose 1-3* [1959]. (*Biblische Studien*, No. 25.) Neukirchener Verlag; DM. 5.50.

the sources drawn on for these chapters, but because he wishes to bring together what the two sources teach about the creative work of God, the place of man in creation, the relation of man and woman to one another and of both to God. Throughout the Bible text is studied for itself alone, and there is no examination of the relation of the stories to older creation stories in the ancient Near East. The interest is primarily theological. Too often the Paradise story is treated as naïve ætiology, instead of the profound theology that it really is. The simplicity of the vehicle of the teaching should not divert attention from the penetration of the teaching it conveys. It is Professor Bič's concentration on this which gives value to this little book.

**The Scrolls Again.** Translations of the non-Biblical texts found at Qumran will soon be legion. Professor Dupont-Sommer, who is well known for his publications on the famous Dead Sea Scrolls, has now issued a large book containing his translations of all such texts so far known, including a number of the smaller texts.<sup>4</sup> He has also discussed many of the problems which the Scrolls raise. On the historical background of the Scrolls his position is substantially unchanged, and here the reviewer continues to be unconvinced that the closing stages of the activity of the Teacher of Righteousness fell in the middle of the first century B.C. There are excellent discussions of the relations between the Scrolls and the inter-testamental books, and on the relations between the Scrolls and the New Testament the author writes soundly on the links but says less than might be said on the differences. He rejects the view that the Copper Scroll contains folklore, and here the reviewer concurs. In common with the majority of scholars he identifies the sect of the Scrolls with the Essenes, and in appendices to the volume he gives his reasons for rejecting some of the alternative views that have been advanced. The major part of this work is devoted to the translations of the texts, and these will be found to have high value. Many of them are not the first translations the author has essayed, and he has studied the many other translations that have been published and the discussions of the more difficult passages which have appeared. The reader will find here, therefore, the mature views on the meaning of the texts by an eminent scholar, and the hesitations the reviewer has at some points of the more general discussion do not temper the welcome he gives to this work.

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<sup>4</sup> *Les Ecrits Esséniens découverts près de la Mer Morte* [1959]. Payot, Paris; Fr. 3000.



## Entre Nous

### Unprecedented Hope and Danger

Many a great man famous in many a walk of life is commemorated in some lecture or in some series of lectures; but surely there is no commemoration quite like that of the William Ainslie Memorial Lecture delivered annually in St. Martin-in-the-Fields in London. William Ainslie was neither philosopher, theologian, politician, man of affairs. He was first man-servant to Bishop Winnington-Ingram; then valet to Dick Sheppard; then Head Verger in St. Martin-in-the-Fields. Finally he died while on duty in 1943 after many anxious days and nights guarding the church during air-raids. Here, indeed, is a unique commemoration, and a noble one.

The 1959 Lecture was delivered by the Rev. David L. Edwards, Editor of the Student Christian Movement Press and a curate in St. Martin-in-the-Fields. His subject is *A Great Gospel for a Great Day*, and the Lecture is now published by the S.C.M. at 2s. net.

Mr. Edwards believes that we are living in a great day, a day of 'unprecedented hope and danger'. Dick Sheppard came to St. Martin-in-the-Fields in a great day, but it was a day of war, and his great gift and attraction was his 'trigger-quick sympathy'. Our great day is a day of peace. 'The difference is that peace has been preserved, and so science has had a chance to show something of what it can do to improve the physical lot of humanity.' But with the gift there is the danger. 'Man can have enough to eat; man can also end his own story with the mushroom in the sky.' 'Through the scientific revolution the children of God are tasting anew of the goodness of the world and of its Creator and Ruler—and are at the same time aware that it may all turn to radio-active ashes.'

At such a time theology has a bounden duty. It has the duty 'to manifest the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—the God whose Fatherhood is not dependent on the vast majority of His children being helpless in their misery'. Here is the task of the Church. Bonhoeffer states that task thus: 'I should like to speak of God not on the borders of life but at its centre, not in weakness but in strength, not therefore in man's suffering and death but in his life and prosperity . . . The Church stands . . . in the centre of the village'—and the village is the village, or city, or town in which we happen to live.

It is at this centre that the Church must be for 'The world must now live with the knowledge that it could die by its own hand—could turn its science into suicide, or its organization for welfare into the spiritual suicide of a society under a Hitler or Stalin'.

Here is the task of the Church. The Church must give to the world 'a vision of human greatness'. If the Church is to perform this task she needs a new Reformation, this time a Reformation, not into division as in the days of Calvin and Luther, but into unity and union. The Church must learn to act 'in the full strength of the whole body of Christ, now (by the mystery of iniquity) divided, but plainly meant in the purposes of God to be visibly, radiantly one'.

If that is ever to be so, the Church must really be the Church—and not 'a holy huddle'. Two things are necessary. Those who are in the Church, and who are in Christ, must gather to receive from Christ through worship, study, fellowship, more and more of that new life which is already at work in them. And then those who have so gathered must go out to scatter into all the world, 'to be the body of Christ there, to be the servant and witness there, the salt and the light of the world, the first fruits of the Kingdom and the colony of heaven'.

To that end the Church must go out 'not with a programme, but with a man existing—not a class for instruction, but a fellowship in deep human relationships. And the man, if we will, look close is Jesus Christ. And the fellowship, if we will look beyond the scandals, is Christ's Church.'

The length of a book is no indication of the value of a book. This book is little more than a pamphlet, but it has in it more than something of the voice of the trumpet sounding with no uncertain sound. Mr. Edwards has said things which needed saying in our day and generation, and he has said them with clarity and with force.

WILLIAM BARCLAY

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